

# MCV



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## 17-21 SPECIAL REPORT: THE THREAT TO RETAIL



Forget early selling, price cutting and increasing interest in the market from the supermarkets - there are other dangers facing games retailers

today. MCV provides a major investigation into the impact of digital downloads, piracy 2.0, casual games and that growing MMO sector.

EVERY BUYER • EVERY BRANCH • EVERY INDIE • EVERY WEEK

INCORPORATING **CTW**

# UK games charts lead the way by including digital downloads

ChartTrack outlines plans to incorporate non-physical games sales into its data • PC charts to be first

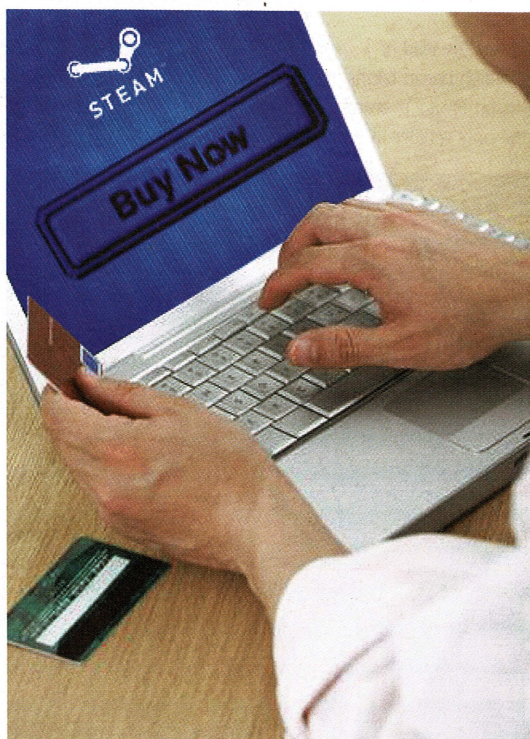
by Ben Parfitt

**CHARTTRACK** is to include digital downloads within the official UK games charts.

The move reflects the increasing importance of downloads in the entertainment sector in general - with the music industry, of course, already fully embracing non-physical sales of singles and albums. And the step will also further underline the strength of the ChartTrack UK data, which is already the envy of other territories around the world.

The fragmented nature of the sector means that negotiations are on-going, but ChartTrack has detailed plans in place already.

"We're some way off downloads becoming a big part of the business, but it's coming," said ChartTrack's Dorian Bloch.



## THE REVOLUTION

A new ChartTrack report entitled *UK Videogame Download Market - Preliminary Study* outlines how the firm envisages its chart listings will appear. The Official Chart will incorporate physical boxed sales and downloads, whilst there will also be separate charts for both physical and download sales only.

**ChartTrack has also identified how it will categorise the different download sales...**

**Retailers/Etailers:** Downloads direct from retail websites

**Format Holders:** Sales that occur over the networks run by Sony, Microsoft, Nintendo and Nokia

**Third Party:** Sales from digital distribution companies such as Metaboli or Steam

**Publishers:** Downloads direct from a publisher to a consumer

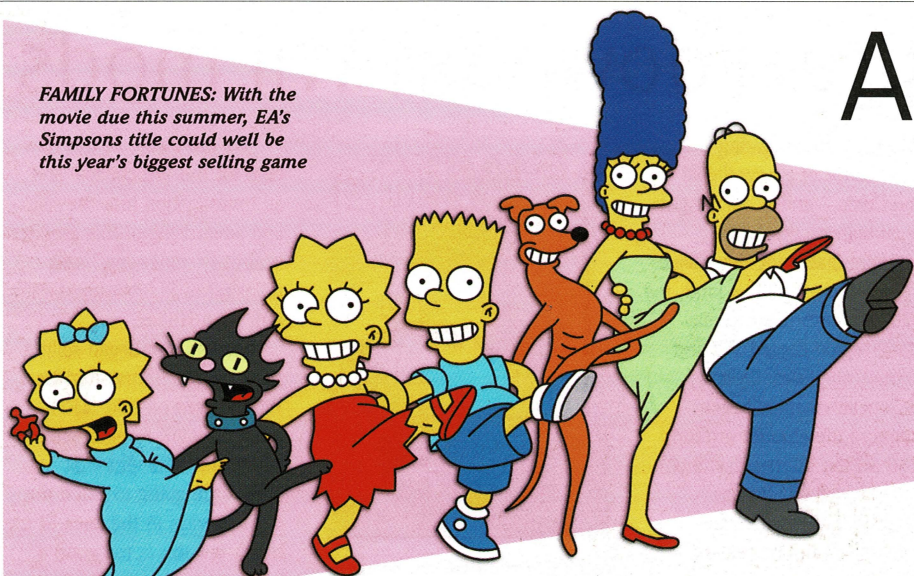
**Developers:** Downloads direct from a developer to a consumer

"And part of our mission statement is to follow the market wherever it goes."

It is expected that downloads will appear first in the PC charts once retailers start to offer games via their websites, but as Bloch points out: "We can't incorporate some retail downloads without incorporating them all."

Downloads via Xbox 360, PS3 and Wii, however, present a tougher challenge. "Console download data is held by the format holders, and for us to get that data will require a lot of negotiation as they might not necessarily be forthcoming with it straight away," Bloch stated. "With consoles, the integration will probably be later rather than sooner as someone needs to independently verify the sales. And we hope that will be us."

**FAMILY FORTUNES:** With the movie due this summer, EA's *Simpsons* title could well be this year's biggest selling game



## Ay, Carumba!

**WITH** *The Simpsons* movie set to be one of the summer's biggest blockbusters, all eyes are on EA's game of the film - which could well be the best-selling release of 2007.

The Redmond games giant has yet to announce any details of its *Simpsons* licence, other than mentioning the franchise during its most recent earnings call last week. However, MCV believes that the new game will be linked to the movie.

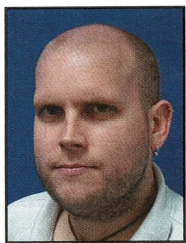
It will be released during FY2008, (beginning April 1st), although it is not known whether it will be released with the movie on July 27th.

The *Simpsons* franchise has proved to be a huge winner in the games sector in the past, with Vivendi's *Hit and Run* having notched up a stonking two million sales to date in the UK alone since it was released in 2003. Incredibly, it still sold 300,000 units last year.



## [LEADER]

## DOWNLOADS ARE A FACT OF LIFE. WE MUST BE PREPARED



THERE'S no doubt that the growing influence of the internet on the whole entertainment sector is going to have an impact on the way our industry operates going forward. But are we actually prepared for what could be a radical shift in retail and distribution models in the market?

Maybe we keep telling ourselves that it's a long way off, but in the same way that the music industry refused to acknowledge the existence of downloads until the likes of Napster had already robbed it of a huge chunk of profits, the industry must prepare now for a future that is almost definitely on the way.

Who would have thought when first playing Xbox Arcade at the tail end of the original Xbox's life cycle that within a year Xbox Live would make digital distribution key to the console gaming model? Sony's ecommerce plans for PS3 sound very well thought out. And even Nintendo, the company which doggedly ignored online gaming in the last generation and continues to ignore trends such as hi-def TV, has joined the act with a tremendous digital retro offering on the Wii format.

**“For all the challenges that retail faces, it is the online digital revolution that lies at the heart of each and every one.”**

For all the challenges that retail faces it is the online revolution that lies at the heart of every one.

ChartTrack's news that it has already laid out plans to integrate downloads into its weekly charts is most likely the first of many acknowledgements of the changing landscape that you'll be reading about in MCV over the coming months and years.

But let's not gloss over the fact that before ChartTrack can realise its dream it has to overcome a number of obstacles. The networked nature of the internet automatically means that localising sales to specific regions is tough. Is a PC game downloaded in Slough from a server in Texas a UK or US sale?

Then, of course, there's the task of getting the disparate elements of the industry that make up the digital jigsaw to reveal their sales information.

Nonetheless, the High Street must act now if it wishes to preserve its future. Some retailers already have some sort of digital offering online, but much more needs to be done. And what of disc replication, logistics and distribution services? How must they evolve to ensure they remain relevant as we move toward an increasingly digital future?

Head to page 17 for MCV's Threat To Retail special to read about the challenges in more detail.

**Ben.Parfitt@intentmedia.co.uk**

## NEWS

# Sony questions retailers'

Platform holder reveals that allocations are yet to be finalised as

by Tim Ingham

SONY HAS expressed worry over the PS3 'gold rush' that has seen a slew of retailers begin pre-orders without their official allocation figures.

HMV, Virgin Megastores, Choices UK and Gamestation all began taking deposits for Sony's new console last weekend, despite the fact that allocation numbers from Sony are still unclear.

They followed the lead of Blockbuster, which began taking £100 deposits on Friday evening – and was the only retailer to



### WHO'S OFFERING PRE-ORDERS?

At the time we went to press, Amazon and GAME are yet to offer a pre-order service on PS3. Blockbuster is the only store to have guaranteed customers with a pre-order a system for launch – and, coincidentally, remains the only retailer to have stopped taking deposits.

RETAILER	PRE-ORDER?	PAYMENT	GUARANTEED
	No	N/A	N/A
	Yes	£100	Yes
	Yes	£30	No
	No	N/A	N/A
	Yes	£20	No
	Yes	£100	No
	Yes	N/A	No
	Yes	N/A	N/A

guarantee customers a PS3 for launch. The chain then ended its campaign after just 36 hours.

“We know that some of these retailers won't have been given their official allocation details,” a Sony spokesperson told MCV. “We would have much rather retailers had waited until they had the facts of their official launch allocation before taking pre-orders, because it can lead to confusion for consumers.”

To date, only GAME and Amazon have resisted the temptation to begin pre-orders. These retailers are waiting patiently for their stock

## Crackdown on Wii mods

ELSPA is investigating the emergence of a new illegal Wii mod chip – and is readying its legal team to crush UK retailers that stock the device.

The first chip of its kind, the Wiinja allows users to play same region copied Wii and GameCube titles. Online European resellers began vending the chip for around £30 on the internet last week.

However, ELSPA has warned that resellers face a potential “criminal record” and “financial action” if they are caught selling the device.



**CHIPPED:** The similarity between Wii and GameCube may be behind the speedy appearance of Wiinja

“We are aware of this new chip for the Wii console and an investigation into the sale and advertising of this product is already underway,” said manager of ELSPA's anti-piracy unit John Hillier.

Retailers also began selling similar chips hours after the Wiinja went on sale. MCV spoke to a UK reseller, who admitted: “The idea that ELSPA are going to catch me out is always in the back of my mind, but this is too good a business for me to stop.”

**ELSPA: 020 7534 0580**



## NEWS

## pre-order frenzy

customers hand over PlayStation 3 deposits



Although some retailers are yet to receive allocations, many are already taking deposits for PS3

numbers from Sony – rather than risk disappointing customers on launchday.

But rival retailers have defended their decision, despite the fact that some consumers may well be left empty handed on March 23rd.

"We haven't got a confirmed quantity from Sony, but we have been speaking to them about the sort of number we can expect and we're hopeful that we can meet the demand shown from our customer base," head of games

at Choices UK Martin Baxter told MCV.

"We're doing pre-orders now because PS3 is not the sort of console that you expect customers to wander in off the street and buy."

Head of PR and promotions at Virgin Megastores Stephen Lynn added: "Sony is aware of our market share and general performance and these factors means we have a good idea of how many units we'll get."

"As soon as we become uncomfortable with the number of deposits we've taken, we'll switch the pre-order system off."

## Nice Tech backed by BBC and Ragdoll for new children's MMO

by Neil Long

**CAMBRIDGE-BASED** Nice Tech has struck a deal with Ragdoll Worldwide – a joint venture between kids' TV producer Ragdoll and the BBC – to create an ambitious new

animated *Tronji* world, and will encourage kids to get involved in problem solving and other challenges. It is being dubbed by Nice Tech as 'the most ambitious game of its type for children of this age ever developed.'



massively multiplayer online game for new property *Tronji*, MCV can reveal.

It is a major coup for the online world specialist and its figurehead Doug Littlejohns, former president and CEO of Red Storm.

The new project is based upon a high-profile new franchise to be broadcast by the BBC and aimed at children aged 6-9 years. It will blend the real world live action footage and the CG-

"To partner two leading players such as Ragdoll and BBC Worldwide, and be offered the opportunity to exploit our development skills and technology to contribute to the *Tronji* vision, is an exciting and terrific opportunity," said Nice Tech CEO Paul Baker. "We are delighted that Ragdoll Worldwide have decided to commission an MMOG to support the launch of *Tronji*."

**Nice Tech: 01223 842608**

## Rockstar Hunts more controversy

**KING** of controversy Rockstar revealed *Manhunt 2* this week amid fears that it could well cause yet another media uproar.

At the time MCV went to press, the tabloids had yet to pick up on the fact that Rockstar Games plans to release the title on PS2, PSP and Wii in the summer.

The PS2 and PSP release is to be the debut title from the newly-formed Rockstar London, in conjunction with Rockstar North, while the Wii version of the game is in the works at Rockstar Toronto.



The first *Manhunt*, a violent stealth action title, hit the headlines in 2004 when it was linked to the murder of 14 year-old Stefan Pakeerah. The

resulting media furore saw it pulled from the shelves of several high street stores. However, the claim was later dismissed by the police.

In unrelated events, it was also banned in other territories, including New Zealand.

**Rockstar: 020 7751 2565**

[ALL FORMATS]  
TOP 10

Week ending February 3rd  
Source: ChartTrack/ELSPA

- 1. LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION**  
CAPCOM  
360
- 2. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6**  
PS2, 360, PC, PSP ..... KONAMI
- 3. FIFA 07**  
PS2, PSP, PC, 360, DS, XBOX ..... EA
- 4. SEGA MEGA DRIVE COLLECTION**  
PSP, PS2 ..... SEGA
- 5. WARIO WARE: SMOOTH MOVES**  
WII ..... NINTENDO
- 6. NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON**  
PS2, 360, PSP, XBOX ..... EA
- 7. WII PLAY**  
WII ..... NINTENDO
- 8. NEW SUPER MARIO BROS**  
DS ..... NINTENDO
- 9. CARS**  
PS2, PSP, DS, GBA ..... THQ
- 10. THE SIMS 2: PETS**  
DS, PC, PS2, PSP ..... EA

[PRE ORDERS]  
TOP 10

Week ending February 3rd  
Source: PLAY.COM

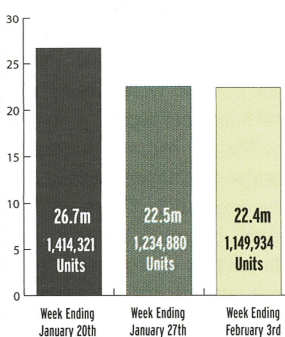
- 1. CRACKDOWN**  
360  
MICROSOFT
- 2. FINAL FANTASY XII**  
PS2 ..... SQUARE ENIX
- 3. HALO 3**  
360 ..... MICROSOFT
- 4. BATTLESTATIONS: MIDWAY**  
360 ..... EIDOS
- 5. C & C 3: TIBERIUM WARS KANE EDITION**  
PC ..... EA
- 6. C & C 3: TIBERIUM WARS**  
PC ..... EA
- 7. DARK AGE OF CAMELOT: MINOTAUR**  
PC ..... KOCH
- 8. ARMED ASSAULT**  
PC ..... 505 GAMESTREET
- 9. EUROPA UNIVERSALIS**  
PC ..... KOCH
- 10. C & C 3: TIBERIUM WARS**  
360 ..... EA



## [MARKET VALUE]

**£22.4m**

Total UK Software Sales  
Source: ELSPA/ChartTrack and Intent Media





## NEWS

# £99 fee for LOTR MMO

Codemasters to offer consumers lifetime subscriptions to new Tolkien MMORPG ● But monthly subs still available

by Ben Parfitt

**AFTER** experimenting with alternative payment methods with its earlier MMO *ArchLord*, Codemasters is once again dabbling with new subscription models by offering players of its upcoming *Lord of the Rings Online* the chance to subscribe for life.

The £99.99 deal will allow gamers lifetime access to the Tolkien-themed MMO servers, a package that Codemasters hopes will generate extra interest in the title and drive it to huge success.

"We think people are going to be really interested in playing *LOTR Online* – it's a great game and the offer means players don't need to worry about ongoing subscription payments," Codemasters' vice president and general manager of online gaming David Solari told *MCV*. "It should appeal to hardcore *LOTR* fans and committed MMO gamers.



**PRECIOUS:** Codemasters' expects *LOTR Online* to far surpass its achievements with previous MMO titles

**"We want to be one of the top MMO games on the market – we're certainly aiming to be number two."**

**David Solari, Codemasters**

"If we've got our marketing right and allowed enough people to get to grips with the game in beta we should have a reasonably sized community from the start, which should help people to make the decision to commit to it."

Those who prefer to subscribe in a more traditional manner still have the option of paying £8.99 a month or £35.94 for a six-month subscription. And whilst Codemasters' previous MMO titles to date have failed to set the online RPG scene alight, the publisher understandably has high expectations for its latest offering.

"It would be stupid to say we're aiming for the same numbers as *World of Warcraft*, but we want to be one of the top MMO games on the market – we're certainly aiming to be number two," Solari added. "*LOTR Online* will without a doubt, and by an order of magnitude, be our biggest MMO title to date. We have very high expectations."

*Lord of the Rings Online: Shadows of Angmar* will be released on PC in both North America and Europe on Tuesday April 24th.

**Codemasters:**  
**01926 816088**

## Portable gaming heads to the Clouds

Public wi-fi operator says it is sourcing targeted PSP and DS content in response to shift in its customer base

**THE** company behind the growing network of public wi-fi hotspots in the UK has told *MCV* that portable gaming is being positioned as one of its key focuses in 2007.

Much as consoles such as PS3 and Xbox 360 are driving the public awareness of hi-def TVs, the PSP and DS are proving to be major factors in the push for widespread public wi-fi internet access.

"As a public wi-fi operator we've traditionally seen our network used by business users, but we're seeing a swing in the type of customers on our network and that's being fuelled by the number of wi-fi

enabled devices on the market, the two biggest of which are Nintendo's DS and Sony's PSP," Cloud's VP of business development Owen Geddes told *MCV*.

functionality to the machine wherever you are."

Last month The Cloud teamed up with Channel 4 to offer PSP-specific downloads featuring the likes of *Celebrity*

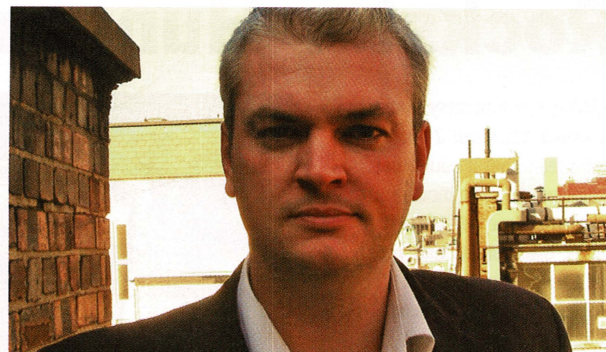
**"We're talking to a number of parties to bring specialist functionality to PSP and DS."**

**Owen Geddes, The Cloud**

"We're already talking to a number of parties such as publishers who are in contact with PSP customers so we can work with them going forwards to bring specialist

*Big Brother* and *Shipwrecked*, and soon hopes to offer a wide variety of content designed for PSP from a number of providers.

The Cloud is also working hard to ensure that the whole



wi-fi experience is as easy as it can be for PSP and DS owners in the future. "Once you sign up we use your PSP's MAC address to allow users instant access – you're never going to use it if you have a

cumbersome interface to get past, but if it's as easy as using a mobile phone then there's a much higher propensity to actually use the network," Geddes adds.

**Cloud: 020 7907 7800**



## NEWS

# EA

## TRADE BULLETIN

# Pattison the latest new face in Capcom's Western drive

Former THQ man becomes senior marketing director in charge of all PAL territories

by Lisa Foster

**INDUSTRY** veteran Michael Pattison joins Capcom Europe on Monday, as the Japanese publisher continues to concentrate on bolstering its Western business.

Pattison has been hired from THQ to take the role of senior

with the likes of *Dead Rising* and *Lost Planet*, Pattison is clearly delighted to be joining the firm.

"Capcom to me as a consumer represents product quality, strong characters, artistic acumen, ingenuity and originality," he told *MCV*. "As an industry person it

“Capcom to me as a consumer represents product quality, strong characters, artistic characters and ingenuity.”

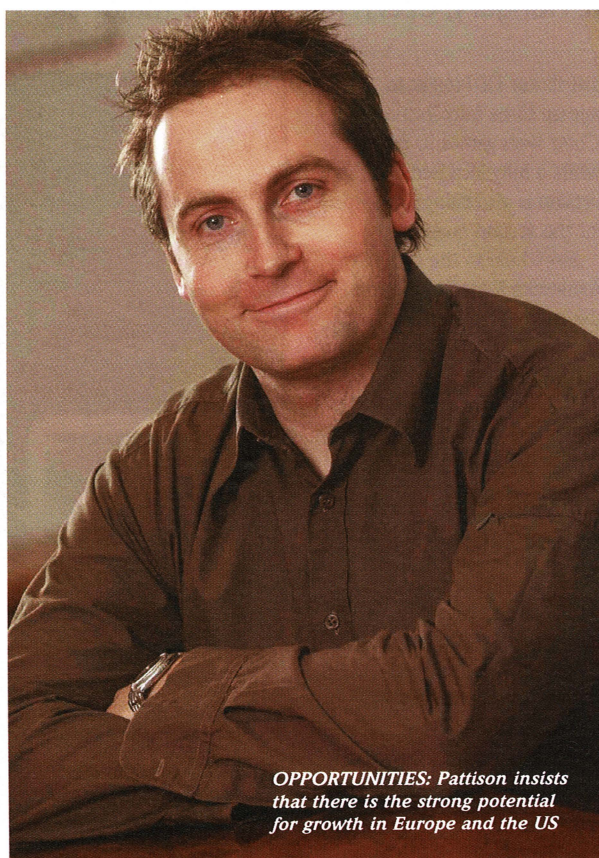
Michael Pattison, Capcom

marketing director. He will be responsible for marketing activities across all PAL territories, working closely with Capcom's US operation. He will report directly to newly-appointed Europe and US boss Mark Beaumont.

And with Capcom enjoying significant success recently

represents a company that has huge potential for growth, particularly in Europe and North America. Whilst it's never been known for releasing a vast amount of SKUs, pushing product quality over quantity, it's yet to realise its full potential."

Capcom: 020 88462550



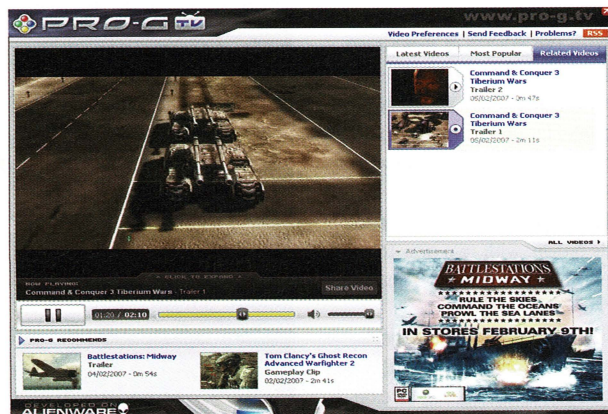
**OPPORTUNITIES:** Pattison insists that there is the strong potential for growth in Europe and the US

# Pro-G begins online games TV

**GROWING** consumer site Pro-G has today unveiled its newest addition, *Pro-G TV*, and is promising users access to the highest quality games clips on any European website.

With stream speeds of around 1.2Mb, which the firm claims is some 450Kb faster than *Eurogamer*, or even *GameSpot*'s non-subscription service, *Pro-G* hopes that its new offering will propel its existing userbase of around 725,000 gamers above the one million unique users per month barrier.

"Pro-G TV will give the site more of an identity and help to expand our readership,"



**TV DINNER:** Whilst only video clips are available at the moment, original content will be appearing on Pro-G TV in the coming weeks

operations director Adam McCann told *MCV*. "It's a new marketing opportunity for

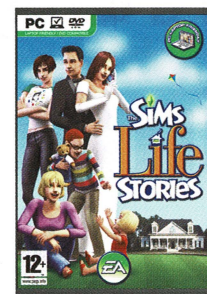
publishers. We're offering tools so they can upload their own clips with no need for a

middleman. All the content is HD quality so publishers will be able to have their game presented in the way that it's meant to be seen, without blockies or distortion. We've been receiving some brilliant feedback so far."

In the next few weeks *Pro-G* will debut the first of its original content on the site, with in-house production beginning imminently.

The new offer will include video reviews, interviews with industry figures and original gameplay clips. "We'll be bringing our own style to the table," McCann added.

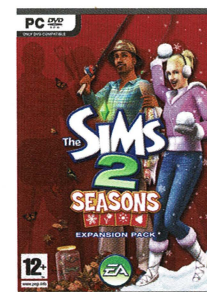
Pro-G: 020 8859 5859



OUT 9TH FEB

PC DVD-ROM

Play through all the great moments of your Sim's life in this easy-to-play, laptop-friendly version of *The Sims*.



OUT 3RD MARCH

PC DVD-ROM

Head outdoors for year-round fun with your Sims with the new *The Sims 2 Seasons* expansion pack.



OUT 16TH MARCH

Nintendo Wii

This is the soul of *SSX*, remixed, re-energised and fully realised.



## NEWS

# NCsoft prepares to launch invasion of Eastern Europe

Publisher targets Russia, Hungary, Czech Republic for major sales push ● New distribution deal signed in Poland

by Neil Long

MMO specialist NCsoft has told *MCV* that it is planning to drastically increase its commitment to Eastern European territories with a new appointment, new distribution deal and a pledge

distributor CDProjekt to release three fully localised *Guild Wars* games in Poland, while a fully-localised Russian version is also being lined up for the second quarter.

Elsewhere in the company, Agnieszka Kwiecien has joined the company as Eastern

“Eastern Europe had been an untapped market until recently. Unlike the UK, PC games dominate retail.”

Max Brown, NCsoft

to localise more of its top-selling titles.

Several initiatives are already underway to ensure NCsoft leads the way in the PC MMO market in the territory. The publisher has struck a deal with Polish

European marketing representative as the publisher continues to ramp up its operations in territories like Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania.



**EASTERN PROMISE:** Max Brown (above) is excited by taking *Guild Wars* to Poland

NCsoft has already increased its sales by 58 per cent year on year in the territories – but now it plans to do even more, revealed sales and operations director Max Brown: “Eastern Europe has been a relatively untapped market until recently, but publishers are quickly realising its potential.

“Unlike Western Europe, where shelf space is at a premium and favours console gaming, the PC dominates retail here. And with a rapidly expanding broadband service, Eastern Europe is set to grow still further.”

“In addition, the type of gamer is generally more ‘hardcore’ in nature than the Western gamer, which fits nicely with our *Lineage II* MMO, as the subscription figures have started to reveal.”

**NCsoft: 01273 682 001**

## A Monster seller for PS3 retailers

SONY failed to bundle a hi-def HDMI cable with PS3, but cable manufacturer Monster is convincing retailers to see it as a sales opportunity.

“We sell to retail by demonstrating that better picture and sound options are available with our extra cables,” Monster’s business director Steven May told *MCV*. “To give the best customer service, retailers have to explain to customers that the default cables are not always the best option.”

Distributed in the UK by Aventi, Monster’s range of PS3 cables includes the Gamelink



**MONSTER MAN:** Steven May says that PS3 peripherals could mean more cash for retail

HDMI cable for £69.95 and the Gamelink Component Video and Fibre Optic Digital Audio Cable for £59.95.

**Aventi: 01264 366022**

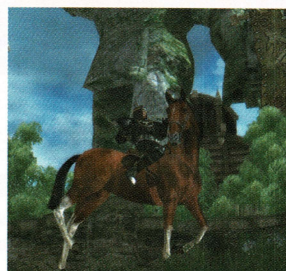
## SouthPeak ups UK profile

INDEPENDENT US publisher SouthPeak Interactive is increasing its UK presence with the release of three new titles over the coming months.

The Texas games firm has had a base in the UK for some time, but has remained relatively low key. However, 2007 looks set to be the year the company raises its profile, with two new titles on Xbox 360 and PC – and one on PSP.

Early March will see the release of *The Con* on PSP, billed as an interesting take on the fighting genre. It was originally published by SCEA in the US, and is being reworked for the European release.

Next up is *Monster Madness: The Battle for Suburbia* for Xbox



**GALLOPING FORWARD:** SouthPeak is targeting Europe with games such as *Two World*

360 and PC. Developed by Artificial Studios, it pays homage to the B-movie horror genre and will arrive in April.

Finally, May will see the arrival of *Two World* for Xbox 360 and PC. A sprawling role-playing game, it will be playable online with up to eight fellow adventurers.

“At SouthPeak we pride ourselves on the ability to sign up the very best games from around the world, and our next three UK releases are no exception,” said executive VP Melanie Mroz.

“We’re staffing up our UK operations and we’re delighted to continue our relationship with Pinnacle.”

**Pinnacle: 020 8309 3600**



## NEWS

# Games bring joy to Choices

Retailer celebrates its best ever Christmas ● All time best performance from games

by Tim Ingham

**CHOICES UK** has defied doomsday predictions for general entertainment High Street retail by recording record-breaking financials for Christmas – and has highlighted games as a star performer.

The store, predominantly known for its DVD rental service, enjoyed a 15 per cent year-on-year rise in its total sales during the eight weeks ended January 13th. And the company has confirmed to *MCV* that games enjoyed its best ever Christmas.

“Games were one of the main factors for a wonderful Christmas for us,” games category manager at Choices Martin Baxter told *MCV*.

“It was definitely the best performance we’ve ever had from the section. Both hardware and software did magnificently. Sales of *FIFA 07*, *Need For Speed: Carbon* and *Gears Of War* went through the roof.”



“Both hardware and software did better than ever for us. Sales of *FIFA* and *Gears Of War* went through the roof.”

Martin Baxter, Choices UK

The company made a pre-tax profit compared with a loss for the same period a year before, but the results couldn't offset a poor summer.

After the results, the firm said it now expects a 'materially reduced' interim pre-tax loss of £3.1 million for the first 36

weeks of the 60 weeks to July 28th, 2007 – a figure heavily affected by losses made during the football World Cup.

A year earlier, the firm lost £4.2 million in the 12 months to June 3rd, 2006.

The company now plans to save £500,000 a year as part of its restructuring.

Choices' interim results will be announced on March 20th.

**ChoicesUK:**  
0870 400 3838

## Myriad signs up Archon

**MYRIAD** Interactive has kicked off the year having signed up the rights to the *Archon* licence.

Free Fall Games' *Archon* first made its appearance in 1983 on the Atari 8-bit computer and was then ported to other formats such as the Commodore 64, ZX Spectrum and the NES.

“We are incredibly pleased to have signed this brand,” said Myriad's founding partner Leo Zullo.

“*Archon* is a well respected licence that has huge nostalgic value for the right reasons – the gameplay, the great combination of strategic thinking and the intense arcade action.”

www.myriad-interactive.com

## [IN STOCK TODAY]

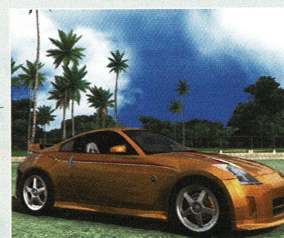
### TEST DRIVE Unlimited

**Publisher:** Atari  
**Developer:** Eden  
**Formats:** PC, PS2, PSP  
**Price:** £34.99 (PC) / £29.99 (PS2, PSP)

After *Test Drive Unlimited* sped its way to third spot in ChartTrack's Xbox 360 chart, Atari's hopes are high for the PC, PS2 and PSP iterations. Eden, which developed the 360 version, has added a wealth of new content for non-360 fans to show off about, including a new 'Hardcore Mode' on PC, which results in a more realistic handling for those who like their racing super accurate. The PSP and PS2 version have been given an entirely new arcade racer feel, including an exclusive 'Quick Race' option

that lets fans dive straight into the action without too much in the way of boring tinkering.

That's not to say that the petrolhead-enticing features that wowed 360 owners have gone anywhere, however. The stunning island of Oahu still offers gamers thousands of miles of picturesque racing terrain, while the biggest ever map of open roads ever seen in a racing game still delivers on choice. And, of course, the same 90 licensed vehicles from the likes of Lamborghini, Ferrari and Jaguar still sit proudly in *TDU*'s virtual garage. Expect the buzz on this one to be built through advertorials that in male lifestyle and car mags including *Nuts*, *Zoo*, *Monkey*, *Max Power* and *Fast Car*.



## [GAME ON]

### POKEMON RANGER:

Prepare for more gotta-catch-em-all chaos at retail on March 30th, as *Pokemon Ranger* is released on DS. It is based around a quest to retrieve Professor Hastings' stolen 'Super-Styler', whatever that may be.

### PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN ONLINE:

Disney Online will offer fans of Captain Jack Sparrow the chance to experience his adventures themselves in this download-only title. It'll be released alongside the next film in May.

### MERCENARIES 2:

**WORLD IN FLAMES:** EA has snapped up the rights to publish this Pandemic-developed action romp, which is set to hit retail on PS3 sometime this year.

### BLAZING ANGELS

**SECRET MISSIONS:** Ubisoft has revealed that the sequel to its original WWII flight combat game is lined up for spring 2007. Set to fly onto PC and Xbox 360, you can experience blowing things up from a great height and shooting at enemy fighters.

**FREE RUNNING:** Ubisoft has also signed up the distribution rights to this game, which will surely appeal to YouTube watchers of the house-jumping pursuit. It will vault into retail on March 16th on PS2 and PSP.

### GODZILLA UNLEASHED:

Atari is planning to 'unleash' everybody's favourite mutant lizard on Wii, DS and PSP in autumn 2007.

### MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM:

**TARGET IN SIGHT:** PS3 owners will be able to strut around in giant robots on March 23rd this year thanks to the release of *Mobile Suit Gundam: Target In Sight*. The Namco Bandai title will be distributed by Atari in European territories.

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## NEWS

## [IN BRIEF]

**THQ:** The US publisher has announced record earnings for the fiscal third quarter ending December 31st 2006. Net sales increased by 33 per cent compared to the same period last year, reaching \$475.7 million. For the nine months ending December 31st net sales climbed by 30 per cent to \$854.8 million.

**TOKYO GAME SHOW:** With the pressure on more than ever following the re-working of E3, this year's Tokyo Game Show will take place between September 20th and 23rd. Now in its 17th year, TGS 2007 will boast an extra day dedicated to business and an expanded Business Solution Area.

**VIVENDI:** *World of Warcraft* continues to be the driving force behind Vivendi's success, with sales at the company's games division climbing 33 per cent in the quarter ending December 31st compared to the same period last year. Revenue hit \$326 million, with full year sales rising 25.4 per cent to \$804 million. With the recent *Burning Crusade* hitting retail outside of this period, expect an equally strong performance next quarter.

**EUTECHNYX:** At the recent Royal Television Society Awards, a ceremony which honours notable achievements in the North East and Borders region, developer Eutechnyx scooped the New Media Award for its work on the game *Big Mutha Truckers 2: Truck Me Harder*. The award was presented by TV presenter Pam Royle and former ITV executive and Codeworks chairman Andy Allen.

**FIZZ:** Simon Valins has established new marketing consultancy Fizz Communications. It will target customers across the DVD, music and games industries and offer advice on services such as scheduling, DVD authoring, QC testing, replication management, planning and strategy, print and production and PR.

# Retail buzz builds as Ghost Rider leads triple-A charge

New release blitz on February 23rd sees arrival of Ghost Rider, Crackdown and FFXII

by Ben Parfitt

THE JANUARY sales have finally come to an end, with retail readying itself for what looks set to be a strong Q1 period, thanks to a number of key titles such as 2K Games' *Ghost Rider*, Microsoft's *Crackdown* and Square Enix's *Final Fantasy XII* heading for the High Street.

Other top titles hitting the shelves on the final Friday of the month include the DS version of Konami's *Pro Evolution Soccer 6*, the PS2, PSP and PC versions of Atari's *Test Drive Unlimited*, Ghostlight's *Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga 2*, Midway's *Blitz: The League* and the PSP iterations of Rockstar's *The Warriors* and Ubisoft's *Rainbow Six: Vegas*.

The increased retail activity will be driven by renewed marketing efforts from publishers such as 2K Games, which is looking to build on the retail buzz with prominent creatives.



"Our release date is a window where we can really maximise sales of *Ghost Rider* on all three formats," 2K Games product manager Ben Payne explained.

"Licensed titles such as this are often seen by everyone as weaker games attached to a film. Retail were apprehensive before, but after watching and playing the code, they are impressed with all SKUs, and are happy to admit the change in opinion."

This avalanche of releases will continue throughout March with titles due to hit shelves including Eidos' *Battlestations: Midway*, Ubisoft's *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2*, Atari's *Bullet Witch* and Konami's *Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin*.

The end of March will, of course, be marked by the arrival of Sony's PS3, and with it a host of titles from publishers including games such as *Call of Duty 3*, *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter*, *Resistance: Fall of Man*, *Genji* and *Fight Night 3*.

Take 2: 01753 854444

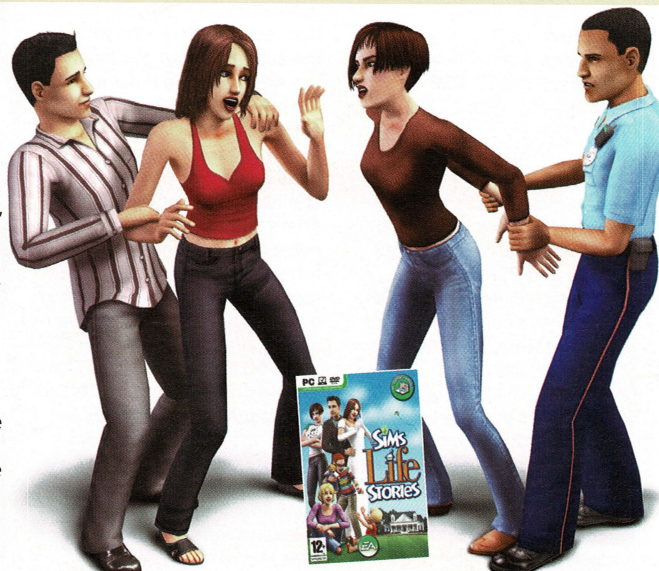
## CAMPAIGN OF THE WEEK

### THE SIMS LIFE STORIES

**Publisher:** EA  
**Format:** PC  
**Release Date:** February 9th

**Print:** A heavyweight campaign will predominantly target press with a youthful, female bias, with ads in *Sugar*, *Bliss* and *More* magazine. 20-something women will be reached via the lifestyle press, including four weeks of advertorial coverage in *Heat* magazine.

**Online:** EA's web campaign will also lean towards a female market, with targeted ads across major women's lifestyle destinations such as *Get Lippy*, *Cosmopolitan*, AOL, *Handbag*, Yahoo and Channel 4's *Big Brother* audition site.



Elsewhere, the publisher is keen to capitalise on the reach of Microsoft's MSN Messenger. Central character Riley will be 'seeded through' EA's Don Lothario automated friend - which over 190,000 people have already added to their MSN contact list. The game will also be promoted on EA's online causal games download site, [www.pogo.co.uk](http://www.pogo.co.uk).

**Other:** Whilst still largely shrouded in secrecy, it is known that EA will be holding a *The Sims Life Stories* exhibition at the über cool Proud Galleries in Camden, London, with a soon-to-be-announced celebrity curator on hand to lend their style to the proceedings.



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GAMEPLAY MADE FAMOUS BY THE CASTLEVANIA SERIES, WITH ADDITIONAL NEW ABILITIES INCLUDING THE SUMMONING DEMONS AND MOVING BETWEEN WORLDS USING MYSTERIOUS PORTRAITS. WIRELESS COMPATIBILITY ALLOWS TWO PEOPLE TO PLAY CO-OPERATIVELY, WHILE ITS MANY SUB-MISSIONS AND A HOST OF OTHER NEW FEATURES PROVIDE A LASTING CHALLENGE. VAMPIRE HUNTING HAS EVOLVED: ISN'T IT TIME YOU DID TOO?

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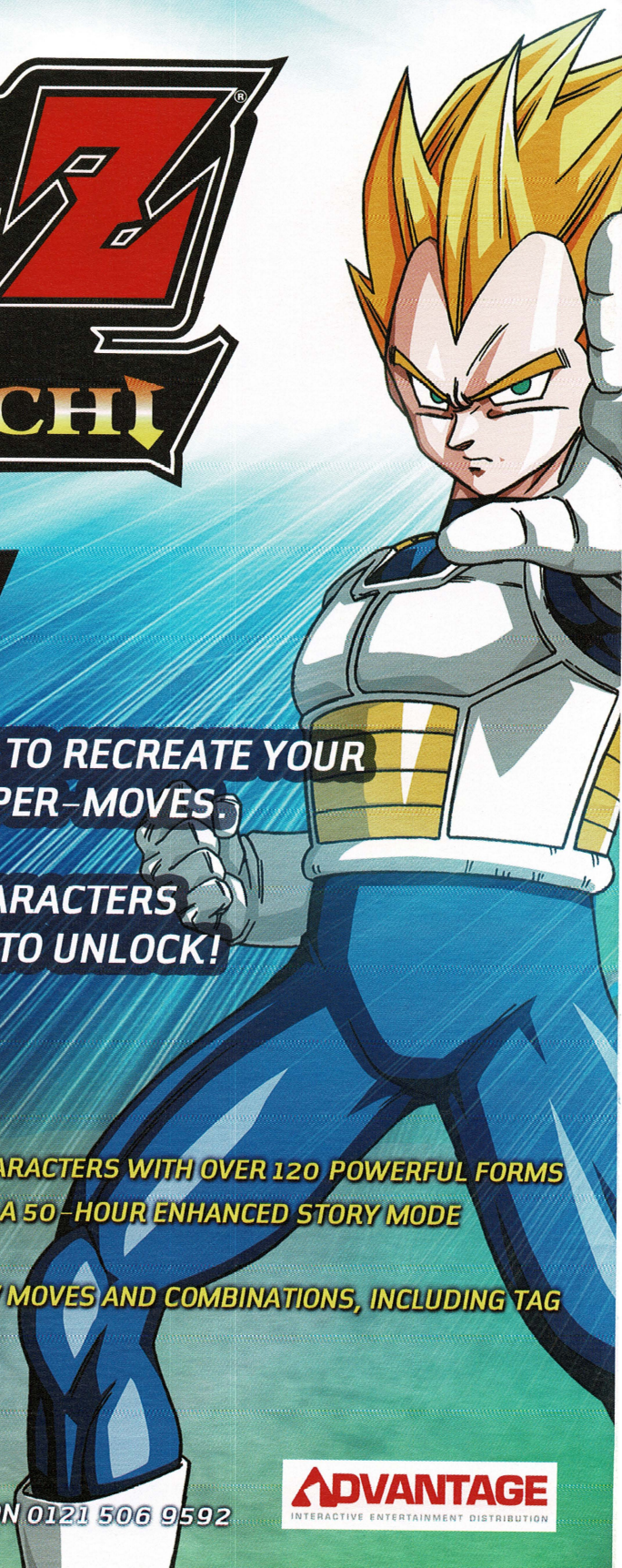
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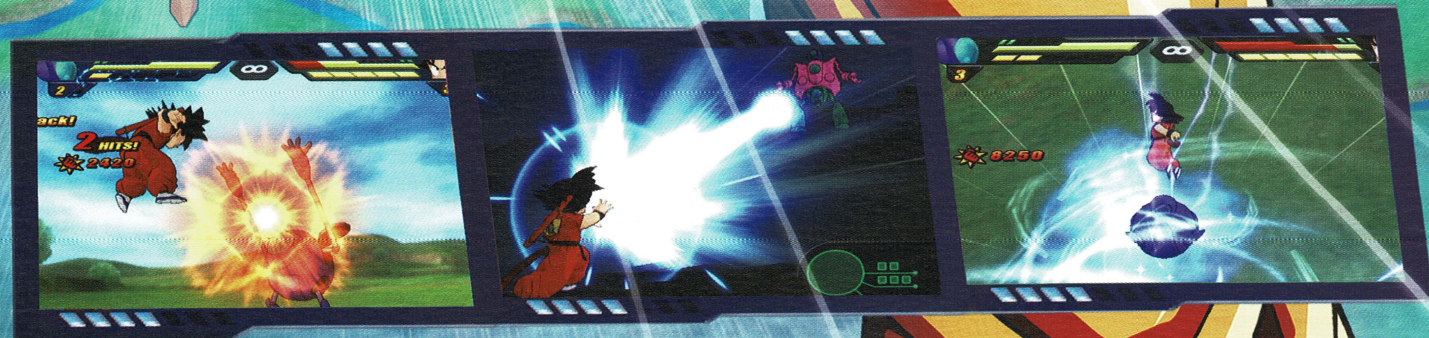




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## OPINION & ANALYSIS

**[VIEW FROM THE TOP]** by David Yarnton

# 'This is just the beginning - the hard work starts here'



THE SHEER level of demand for Wii over the launch period was something that no one could have anticipated.

Globally, the launch of Wii was the single biggest console launch the industry had seen for over ten years.

So whilst we were certainly very well prepared for a good launch the level of demand we saw and continue to see in the

New Year remains very high. We have done our best throughout the whole launch period to be as open and honest as possible with everyone as to how and when stock would be replenished.

As at launch, we are continuing to make multiple and regular shipments across the UK to ensure that we keep up with the demand for Wii.

As of December 31st 2006, Nintendo manufactured four

Wii units per month in the first calendar quarter of 2007.

In other words, together with the four million Wii hardware units Nintendo manufactured as of the end of 2006, we will have produced approximately seven million Wii consoles by the end of March 2007, of which we are planning to have sold six million to distributors and retail customers at the same time.

The latest Chart Track figures show that for the week ending January 27th, Wii is being enjoyed by over 270,000 people in the UK.

As for whether we have deliberately held back stock, it's absolutely not true. Why would we risk frustrating customers and losing potential sales by deliberately holding stock back - it simply does not make good business sense.

At Nintendo we have never attempted to artificially create demand in this way - we always try to do our best to meet and satisfy demand.

We are incredibly pleased that Wii was received so well by so many people, but this is just the beginning - so in many ways the hard work starts now.

We know we need to target and convince more and more people about Nintendo Wii, and we are committed to further surprising people with things they have never experienced before with a console.

And, of course, we will still cater to the needs of avid gamers by launching titles like *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption* and *Super Mario Galaxy* going forward, amongst many other top quality titles.

**David Yarnton is General Manager of Nintendo UK**

*"We are incredibly pleased that Wii was received so well by so many people. We need to target and convince more and more people."*

Many retailers are reporting more interest in Wii now in the New Year than at launch which is fantastic news but obviously does present us with a challenge to keep stock levels high to satisfy that demand.

million Wii hardware units and sold 3.19 million of them to our distributors and retail customers around the world.

Yet, Wii still faces an out-of-stock situation globally. We are scheduling to make one million

**[IN-GAME ADVERTISING]** by Johnathan Epstein

# Google deal would be good news



IN GENERAL the fact that Google is looking into the in-game advertising space shows that, like Microsoft's move into the sector, it is a positive sign of the belief in the opportunity - or threat, depending on where you stand - that the in-game advertising sector represents in terms of revenues.

As a company, we've been aware for some time that any deal between Adscape and Google will strengthen Double Fusion's position as a premium, specialised brand with a specialist service.

Google will not be aiming to do the same as us. Right now

with, like McDonalds and Daimler-Chrysler, they want to know about games - games are an entertainment environment and it is really important to be a specialist. It is the specialist that ultimately drives innovations and is ultimately the winner.

*"Google will not be aiming to do the same in-game ads as us. It is the specialist that ultimately drives innovation."*

Google's strategy is based on automated ad buying and it has both dynamic and static ads. When you look at companies that we've worked

Double Fusion works with all kinds of games but we do work particularly in sports games and I think it's our job to make sure we don't interfere with

game performance. From a creative standpoint it's our job to ensure the range of advertisers sit appropriately and that's harder in some environments than in others.

What users need to understand - and many of them do - is that ultimately gaming does bring them great value for money entertainment, in that one game offers hours and hours of gameplay. As we continue to develop these revenue streams and create our own market, it can be great for users, and it can be great for retailers as well. Ad revenues allow for new business models to emerge.

Gamers might be asking: 'what do I get out of it?' Well, there's better games because of greater investment in development and over time we

could have games at lower price points.

If these extra revenues mean that more games are made and more original games are given a chance, then we believe that it can affect all of us in the games business over time. If users understand that, then they'll understand why this is important for them.

I think we'll get to the point where ad revenues can cover the development cost, but we're not here yet. What you need is a really strong creative and a development team. Over time, advertisers will become familiar with our industry and the investment will increase further, benefitting everyone.

**Johnathan Epstein is the Chief Executive Officer at Double Fusion**



# THE MCV INTERVIEW

**CHRIS LEWIS** VP EMEA HOME AND ENTERTAINMENT, MICROSOFT

## No Surrender

Thanks to arriving at the table a year ahead of its rivals, Xbox 360 is enjoying a market-leading position in the next-gen sector. But with Nintendo's Wii off to a flyer and Sony's PS3 coming next month, the heat is on the Seattle firm to maintain its domination. **Lisa Foster** quizzes Microsoft's European boss Chris Lewis about the arrival of his competitors and those recent forecast revisions...

### How did Xbox 360 perform in PAL territories over Q4 and the Christmas period?

We had a great Christmas, beating our goal of shipping more than 10 million Xbox 360s to date - selling 10.4 million worldwide. We also outsold our competition during this holiday season by significant margins.

To break down the total figure, we saw sales of about 3.1 million in Europe, 6.0 million in North America and 1.3 million in the rest of the world.

### Forecasts for sales until the end of this current financial year (end of June) have been cut from 13-15 million units to 12 million. Why the conservative alteration?

We looked at three things before we made this adjustment - the historical seasonality of sales during the period, the pricing of the product and inventory levels that we already have already sold to retailers. We are taking a more cautious view of the market and our second half revenue, and console guidance reflects this.

### That announcement led to some games publishers seeing a dip in their share price, with analysts suggesting that 2007 will prove to be a tough year for the games industry in general. Do you agree with that view?

We think it's going to be a great year. Speaking as a platform holder, I'm excited about some of the products coming to Xbox 360 this year from our third party partners - *Bioshock* and *Grand Theft Auto 4* to name two. We work hard to make Xbox 360 a good business for our partners and we'll continue to make sure that it is.

### What are your thoughts on the performance of Wii so far?

Nintendo has done a good job of positioning Wii as a fun party game system, and they've sold out their

launch allotment, as Nintendo always do. Will Wii be a long-term viable platform for non-party games? Only time will tell.

### And Sony's announcement about its European launch plans?

I've given up trying to keep up with what Sony is announcing or not announcing. We are executing against our own vision and plan and will continue to do so. Sony will launch and sell out their limited quantities. And consumers will try to figure out if the addition of unproven technology is worth the £200 premium over the Xbox 360.

### How much pressure does the arrival/imminent arrival of two other hardware formats put on Microsoft in Europe?

Like I said, we're executing against our own vision and plan and will continue to do so. We dance to our own rhythm and that set by our consumers - not to the competition. But as I have also said many times, strong and lively competition continues to drive up the quality of what the consumer ultimately gets.

### So, when's that inevitable hardware price cut coming? End of March? Beginning of April?

There are no plans to cut our hardware prices. We already offer consumers outstanding value and choice - especially when you compare us to our soon-to-be competition.

### Any comments on the rumours about a new 360 console featuring HDMI, 120 Gb hard drive and, possibly, a HD DVD player?

We haven't announced anything - we're happy with our current offering. But we're always listening to what consumers want and our track record is testament to our commitment to deliver that in good measure!

“There are no plans to cut our prices. We offer outstanding value when compared to our soon-to-be competitors.”

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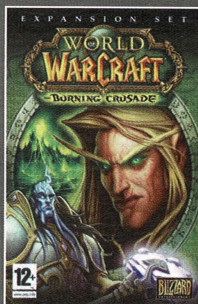


## CHART ANALYSIS

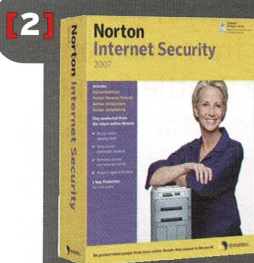
# The January sales

2007 has brought us Big Brother, broken resolutions and a bit of a cold so far. Thankfully, people are still buying games, so it's not all bad. **Neil Long** reports...

## [1] ALL FORMATS FULL PRICE TOP 20



- World of Warcraft: Burning Crusade**  
PC ..... Vivendi Games
- Norton Internet Security 2007**  
PC ..... Symantec
- FIFA 07**  
PS2, PC, PSP, 360, DS, Xbox, GBA ..... EA



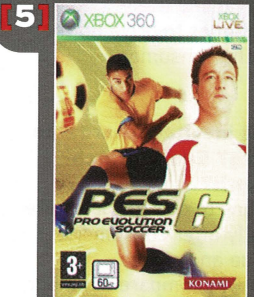
- Lost Planet: Extreme Condition**  
360 ..... Capcom
- Pro Evolution Soccer 6**  
PS2, 360, PSP, PC ..... Konami
- Need For Speed: Carbon**  
PS2, PSP, 360, Wii, DS, Xbox, PC, GBA ..... EA



- The Sims 2: Pets**  
DS, PS2, PC, PSP, GBA, Mac ..... EA
- Call of Duty 3**  
360, PS2, Wii ..... Activision
- Wario Ware: Smooth Moves**  
Wii ..... Nintendo
- New Super Mario Bros**  
DS ..... Nintendo
- Lego Stars Wars II: Original Trilogy**  
PS2, PSP, DS, 360, GBA, PC, Xbox, GC ..... LucasArts



- Gears of War**  
360 ..... Microsoft
- WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2007**  
PS2, 360, PSP ..... THQ
- Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas**  
360, PC ..... Ubisoft
- Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess**  
Wii, Cube ..... Nintendo
- Football Manager 2007**  
PC, PSP, 360 ..... Sega



- GTA: Vice City Stories**  
PSP ..... Rockstar
- World Snooker Championship 2007**  
360, PS2, PSP ..... Sega
- Tony Hawk's Project 8**  
360, PS2 ..... Activision
- Animal Crossing: Wild World**  
DS ..... Nintendo

Although PC gaming continues to decline in general terms, MMO fans came out in their thousands in January to snap up *World of Warcraft* expansion *The Burning Crusade* to make it the top-selling game of the month on all formats. Despite its mid-January release, it still beat off the hugely popular new security software from Norton and EA Sports' colossal selling *FIFA* franchise.

And hats off to Capcom too - Xbox 360 exclusive *Lost Planet* turned out to be the fourth-best selling games during January, suggesting that Xbox 360 is really coming into its own as a gaming platform.

Speaking of formats, new kid on the block Nintendo Wii also fared well, with *Wario Ware* gatecrashing the top ten at nine - another decent debut for a single format game.

### FULL PRICE FORMAT SHARE

	(by units)
PC	27.5%
Xbox 360	20.5%
PS2	17.6%
Nintendo DS	14.2%
PSP	10.5%
Nintendo Wii	6.7%
Game Boy Advance	2.2%
Xbox	0.5%
GameCube	0.1%

### FULL PRICE FORMAT SHARE

	(by value)
PC	27.0%
Xbox 360	24.1%
PS2	15.5%
Nintendo DS	13.2%
PSP	9.3%
Nintendo Wii	8.5%
Game Boy Advance	1.3%
Xbox	0.5%
GameCube	0.1%

*Burning Crusade* had a large say in boosting the PC market's unit and sales performance, alongside that lucrative *Norton* security software. Meanwhile, PS2 was pipped for second spot by 360 in both categories - another boost for Microsoft.

### BUDGET FORMAT SHARE

	(by units)
PC	40.6%
PS2	32.2%
Nintendo DS	9.4%
PSP	6.2%
Xbox	4.4%
Xbox 360	3.2%
Game Boy Advance	2.3%
Nintendo Wii	1.3%
GameCube	0.2%

### BUDGET FORMAT SHARE

	(by value)
PS2	40.2%
PC	21.5%
Nintendo DS	16.7%
PSP	9.9%
Xbox 360	4.3%
Xbox	3.7%
Game Boy Advance	2.6%
Nintendo Wii	0.7%
GameCube	0.3%

With plenty of PC titles on sale for a pound at retail, it's no surprise to see high unit sales but a far lower market value for PC games. The ageing PS2 is putting in a pretty decent performance in the budget sector too, as game prices continue to fall.

### TOTAL SOFTWARE BY LABEL

	(by units)
1. EA Games	8.0%
2. Nintendo	7.5%
3. THQ	6.0%
4. Ubisoft	5.6%
5. EA Sports	4.1%
6. Sega	4.0%
7. Focus	3.9%
8. Activision	3.6%
9. GSP	3.5%
10. Microsoft	3.4%

### TOTAL SOFTWARE BY LABEL

	(by value)
1. Nintendo	10.1%
2. EA Games	7.8%
3. Ubisoft	6.6%
4. Microsoft	6.4%
5. THQ	6.3%
6. Sega	4.9%
7. Capcom	4.8%
8. EA Sports	4.6%
9. Norton	4.4%
10. Activision	4.2%

Surprisingly, Nintendo manages to outstrip EA Games here - although of course if you include EA Sports, there is only one winner. At least someone's putting up a fight against a dominant EA - Ubisoft and THQ are up there scrapping it out too.

### TOTAL SOFTWARE BY COMPANY

	(by units)
1. Electronic Arts	13.4%
2. Ubisoft	8.1%
3. Nintendo	7.6%
4. THQ	7.5%
5. Vivendi Games	6.1%
6. Take 2	5.5%
7. Sega	4.8%
8. Activision	4.7%
9. SCE	3.8%
10. Microsoft	3.6%

### TOTAL SOFTWARE BY COMPANY

	(by value)
1. Electronic Arts	13.0%
2. Nintendo	10.3%
3. Ubisoft	8.9%
4. THQ	6.9%
5. Microsoft	6.5%
6. Vivendi Games	6.4%
7. Sega	5.2%
8. Activision	5.2%
9. Capcom	4.8%
10. Take 2	4.8%

No surprises here. While EA's dominance is obvious, one thing is less clear - which one of Nintendo, Ubisoft and THQ is closest to EA overall. In January it was Nintendo, but THQ and Ubisoft will be trying to change that this month.





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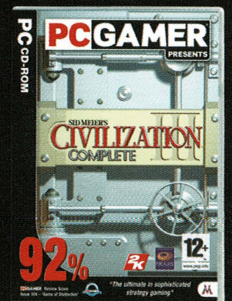
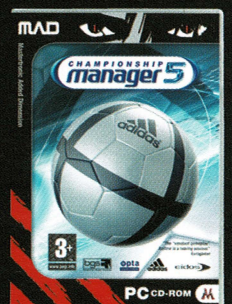
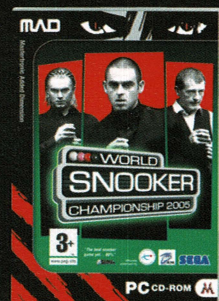
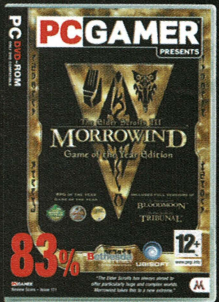
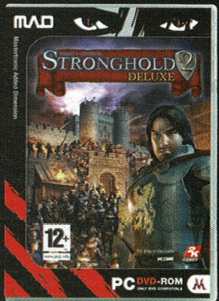
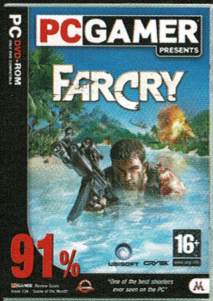
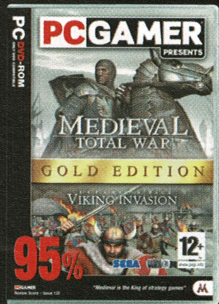
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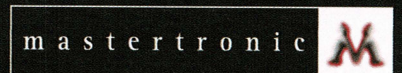
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# Risky Business?

The retail landscape is becoming more competitive than ever before - and some say the High Street is suffering. **MCV** takes a look at the four biggest retail threats...



## DOWNLOADS P18

Why buy a game in-store when you can download it at home? MCV reports

## PIRACY P19

The pirates have moved from the streets to the web - we investigate

## MMOs P20

Some gamers only ever play one MMO - is this the start of a worrying trend?

## CASUAL GAMES P21

The free online games market is booming - we ask its top dogs why



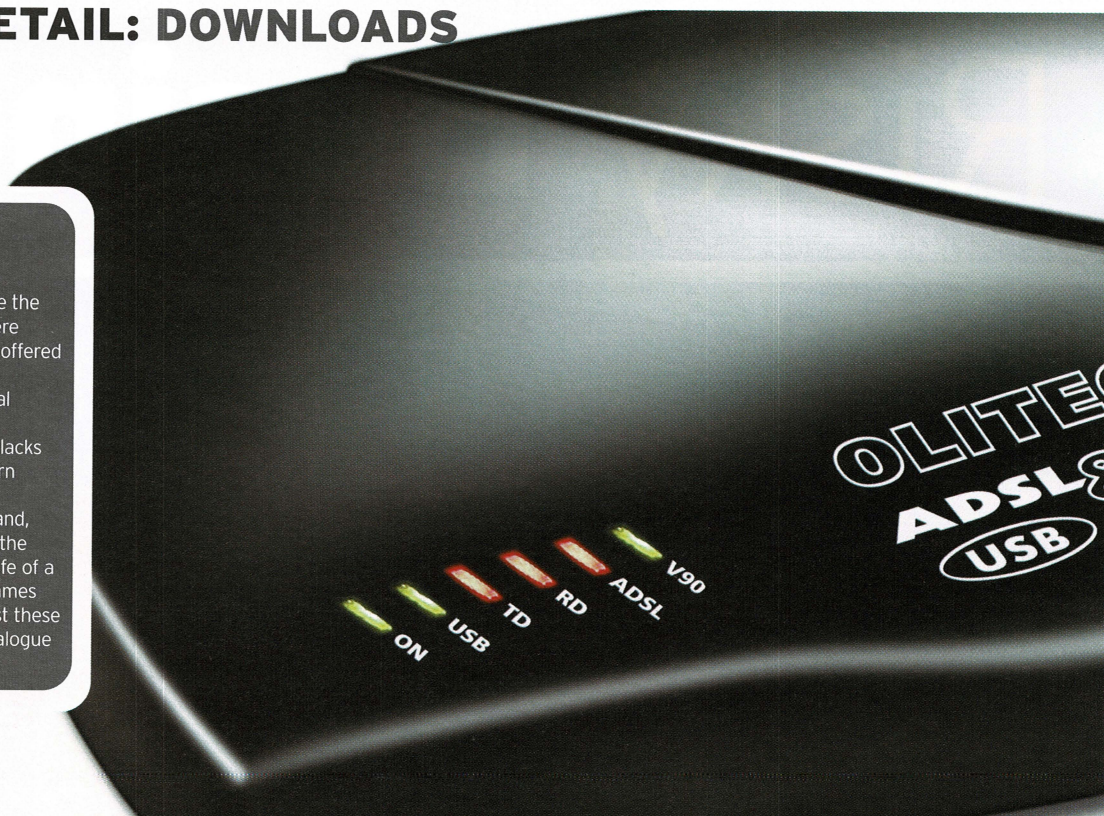
## THE THREAT TO RETAIL: DOWNLOADS

### THE PROS AND CONS

Even if the market were to arrive at a point where the technological barriers to downloading content were completely eradicated, there are still many perks offered by retail that could sustain its importance.

The pre-owned sector, for example, is still a vital stepping stone into the games market for a large proportion of the consumer base. Digital content lacks the trade-in value of its boxed counterparts, in turn raising the material cost of new purchases.

From a publisher's perspective, on the other hand, digital content does a far better job of sustaining the value of software. "Digital definitely extends the life of a game," Metaboli's Paul Howes claims. "At retail games have a very short shelf life, but digitally we can list these titles indefinitely, breathing new life into back catalogue titles. Publishers are realising this."



# Digital nightmares

The threat of online shopping is already having a huge impact on the UK High Street, and whilst games retail may be safe for now, is it only a matter of time until digital downloads eradicate boxed retail completely? **Ben Parfitt** buys a bigger hard drive...

**SPEAK** to almost anyone in the industry about the idea of digital downloads bringing an end to traditional retail and they will nearly all say, "It's going to happen, but not for a very long time." They've been saying that for years. But is there a chance that the two can live together in harmony?

US firm ABI Research recently predicted that micropayments for console downloads alone will total \$833 million by 2011. Take PC into account and this undoubtedly becomes a huge figure – though the fragmented nature of the downloads sector means it's almost impossible to put a figure on its worth.

### FULL STEAM AHEAD

Valve's *Half-Life 2* was one of the first genuinely triple-A titles that was available to download at the same moment it debuted in stores. The company's online Steam technology uploaded content to users' PCs in the weeks running up to release, ready for midnight activation.

The success of Steam has seen many publishers including the likes of Take 2,

Activision and Introversion jump on board with the service. Others, meanwhile, prefer to offer their own content downloads – head to *EA.com* now to buy any of the firm's recent PC titles direct.

And whilst consoles are still playing catch-up, the new generation of machines have certainly signified that digital content is going to be big news in the future.

holders are doing all they can to make publishers think digitally.

### CONSOLE-ATION PRIZE

"Downloads is a young market, but is increasingly informing the strategy of publishers," explains Paul Howes, business manager for UK and Northern Europe at online games firm Metaboli. "I can see how it's beginning to influence how they position products."

**“ Whilst the hardcore fan will embrace digital downloads, little Johnny is still going to want his game from a shop. Gavin Ogden, CVG ”**

Whether it's Microsoft's successful Xbox Live premium content distribution (and the upping of its Live Arcade file size limit to accommodate more extensive titles), Nintendo's rich retro offering or Sony's consumer friendly online store (which will soon offer its first full title – *Tekken: Dark Resurrection*), it seems that platform

In contrast to the relative simplicity of launching a PC service, only Nintendo, Sony and Microsoft hold the keys to cracking console space. And with data storage still at a premium on even the next-gen machines, the digital future is still a distant threat – for now.

And even if purely digital delivery of console content were possible, there's still

uncertainty as to whether the market is actually ready for the sea change just yet.

"At the moment there's still not enough interest for publishers to rely completely on downloads," says *CVG Online's* editor Gavin Ogden.

"Whilst the hardcore would embrace it, little Johnny is still going to want to walk into a shop and buy his game. The technology is still a bit of a barrier – but it's going to get faster and cheaper, though perhaps it won't quite happen in this generation."

Alongside the prophets of doom, however, there are also some positive messages for retail. Perhaps there is a place for both.

"Digital downloads will certainly grow in terms of share, but people do like going out to shop," adds Howes. "In the long run we will see a more multi-channel approach to retail, with stores and digital co-existing together."

So whilst we should perhaps hold back on writing retail's obituary just yet, it's clear that ignoring the threat posed by digital distribution is still most definitely not advised.



## THE THREAT TO RETAIL: PIRACY

## Piracy 2.0

Illegal copies of games have been around for years - but now everyone can be a pirate on the web. **Neil Long** investigates...

**THERE'S** a quiet revolution going on in the murky world of piracy. For years it has typically been the preserve of dodgy car boot stalls, unscrupulous indies and geezers in pubs nudging-and-winking their way to making a sale.

But what is happening now is something far bigger, more organised and more threatening than ever before. Piracy is increasingly becoming an on-demand world where it is the end user who has complete control.

Once they get their machine chipped or order the right piece of hardware, they can take their pick from a vast range of games available for download by the click of a mouse.

## GOING DIGITAL

"Certainly the instances of physical master copies has changed," begins a candid ELSPA Anti Piracy Unit manager John Hillier. "It is done more and more through their computers these days and the games are made to order, so that has certainly changed. A lot of it is done either on-site or to order now - you won't get a great deal of people that buy up a huge number of discs and sell them off anymore."

Piracy is moving away from the streets and onto the web, and has been given fresh impetus thanks to its new-found accessibility. To effectively tackle this menace, the Anti Piracy Unit is changing the way it works and heading online too, says Hillier.

"We have a very good internet investigator and we are finding more and more internet piracy. It has shot up



“ The big guys involved in piracy are online and they are making an awful lot of money out of it. ”

**John Hillier, Anti Piracy Unit**

to be about 30 per cent of all our seizures and this year with our re-focusing, that's where we are going a lot more. Of course we're not going to ignore the car boots and so on, but we are going to concentrate on intelligence-

led and internet-led operations. We're providing much better intelligence packages for the enforcement agencies to act upon. The big guys involved in piracy are online and they are making an awful lot of money."

And while Hillier's APU is able to take on those involved in larger-scale operations, when it comes to the casual, solo gamer who dabbles in a little downloading, it seems the industry has its hands tied.

## CAUGHT UP IN THE WEB

"We don't and can't concentrate on the individual that is in it for himself - we'll never be able to trace that. It is a case for civil law, and we deal specifically in criminal law. At the moment, we have no remit for concentrating on the individual and we don't have the capacity for it. That may well change as things develop. You've seen the problems the BPI have had with music downloads."

So now the landscape has changed forever, and the gaming public is getting increasingly web-savvy, surely things are going to get worse?

## A DOWNLOADERS' DREAM

Maybe not, adds Hillier: "The capacity to do it is going up, and plenty more people are trying it, but the overall level of piracy is at a fairly consistent level," he concludes.

"It is certainly moving from a physical media to a digital media, but now you have HD and Blu-Ray coming along - whether or not it will always be easy to download a game is down to where the technology goes next."

## NEXT-GEN PIRACY

As games consoles get more advanced, so too do the pirates eager to profit from them. Although platform holders invent increasingly impressive ways of protecting console hardware from being 'cracked', it seems there's no stopping the pirates. Even barely two months after a hardware release like Nintendo's Wii, there are several ways to run pirate games on the machine, explains Anti-Piracy Unit manager John Hillier (pictured).

"There are already three chips available for the Wii console - Wiinja, XenoWii and the Viper Wii. There was a Viper and Xeno chip for the GameCube so all they've done is bring it up to date.

"360 was cracked ages ago - it was a matter of months. The technology is there for virtually any console. I dare say that in America there were people in those midnight queues for the PS3 launch that are working on cracking it now. Sony have tried to protect it, but it's basically a matter of time."





## THE THREAT TO RETAIL: MMO GAMES

# Massively Damaging?

Are MMOs eating up gamers' time at retail's expense? Should the High Street be worried by World Of Warcraft?

**David McCarthy** subscribes to the myth...

**LAST MONTH**, Blizzard's *World of Warcraft* expansion pack *The Burning Crusade* sold 2.4 million copies in its first day on sale. Which is good news, right? Well it is if you're Blizzard. It might not be if you're just a lowly retailer. After all, won't the incredible ongoing success of *WoW* – and other all-conquering MMOs, such as *Second Life* and *City of Heroes* – mean that gamers will be left without any time or money to spend down the shops?

### ALL WORK AND MMO PLAY

Obviously, no-one can blame Blizzard for making a game so good that everyone wants to get lost in their virtual world. But it's clear that MMORPGs require a massive investment in time and money on the part of the people who play them.

As Max Brown, from *City Of Heroes* creator NCsoft Europe puts it, "MMO PC gamers tend to be a lot more dedicated than your average console gamer, who plays a couple of times a week. Due to the expansive nature of MMOs and the masses of continuously updated content they have a much longer lifespan beyond the eight to 15 hours you get out of most standalone games currently on the market."

It seems pretty obvious, then, that the rise and rise of the MMORPG means the fall and fall of every other type of game. Marketing director for GAME Anna Macario strongly disagrees. "We do not find that that is the case," she says. "Customers who purchase online games are already keen gamers and tend to own more than one platform, so are frequently in our stores buying other games."

### THERE'S MMO TIME TO LOSE

Ross Atherton, editor of *PC Gamer* concurs. "I've seen no data to suggest the success of *WoW* is putting people off buying other PC games," he says. "It's worth noting that PC game sales were sliding before *WoW* launched."



Surely that's just because the impact of MMORPG sales has yet to emerge? isn't it only a matter of time before these online virtual worlds start eating into retailers' real world profits?

Maybe. Then again, maybe what will actually happen is that MMORPGs will open up new profit avenues for traditional retail. While these games certainly do require an investment in time and effort, it's also clear that they also open up new markets, increasing footfall. "The arrival of *World of Warcraft* actually grew the market, attracting younger gamers and more females," observes Parker Consulting's Nick Parker. "It's changed the usual demographic from the core older male gamer to a wider community. I don't think it will affect the purchase of other PC games. What's happened is that it's brought in a new market to PC gaming. From an economic point of view, *WoW* has actually helped the overall value of the PC market."

### MMO EXPENSE SPARED

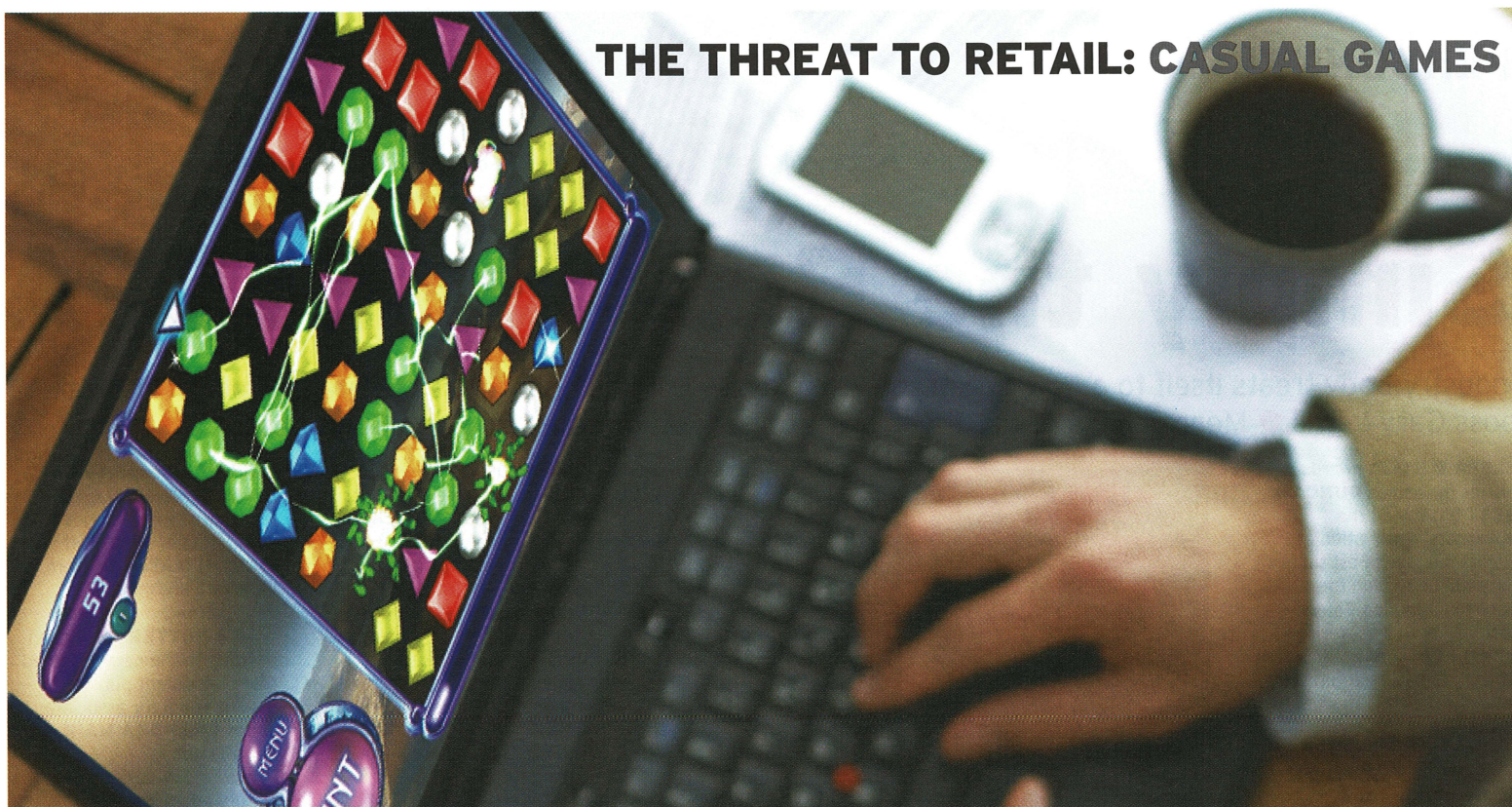
Perhaps then, the real, more subtle threat to retailers is that the success of MMORPGs will hasten the transition to digital downloads. Last week, *Burning Crusade* was made available as a download, easily accessible by simply logging in to a *World of Warcraft* account. But again, this threat can be overstated, as Parker explains: "Online delivery of content and digital distribution is obviously where we're going in the long-term. As with any media industry, retail will find challenging times ahead unless it adapts and changes the way it works. But that will only start to impact by 2010. I don't think we'll be in a situation where boxed product just dries up by next year. The big impact won't really happen for another few years."

Which gives retailers another few years to adapt to the changing face of the video game market – just as it has done for the past couple of decades.



**MMO STRINGS ATTACHED:** From left to right, Analyst Nick Parker, NCsoft's Max Brown, GAME's Anna Macario and PC Gamer's Ross Atherton.





## THE THREAT TO RETAIL: CASUAL GAMES

**JUST ONE MORE:** The addictive nature of games like PopCap's *Bejeweled 2* might be more beneficial to retail than you think

# Driven to distraction

Can casual games do nothing but damage games retail - or do they offer a new, untapped revenue stream? **Tim Ingham** diverts his attention...

**CASUAL** games might be designed as a bitesize distraction - but they're starting to become a worrying pre-occupation for games retail.

According to the Casual Games Association in the US, the industry is due to be worth \$1.56 billion by 2008 - and that's just online. Throw popular boxed incarnations of already-established classics like *Bejeweled*, *Bookworm* and *Luxor* into the mix and entertainment outlets may have good reason to be worried.

### JUST A MINUTE

Retail fears range from casual games eating up the time of dedicated customers to non-traditional players being stolen away from the 'serious' games industry.

But with the European market still in relative infancy, and companies like PopCap and MumboJumbo offering value boxed titles, now might be the perfect time for UK retail to embrace the sector.

"This is a very timely moment for European retailers to start considering the benefits of stocking boxed casual titles," says Garth Chouteau, communications

director of PopCap - which has sold 10,000,000 units of *Bejeweled* since it was first released in 2001.

"Although the downloadable model represents the most successful side of the sector, there is still a small but significant percentage of this billion dollar market who are still not comfortable getting their games from the internet."

### TAKE IT EASY

The ever-increasing number of casual games in massive US retailers like Wal-Mart suggests our friends across the pond are already reaping rewards.

"Casual games make up a very different part of the market than the vast majority of customers who shop in specialist games retailers," adds retail analyst at Verdict Research James Flower. "They are more of a threat to non-specialist retailers of PC titles. By not stocking them, they narrow their offering to expensive titles that only appeal to hardcore gamers."

"These retailers could have a win-win situation, where they attract both hardcore and casual PC gamers. But they would have to sell a lot of volume to both to make the investment worthwhile."

Chouteau recommends that retailers who still see casual games as more foe than friend "dip their toe" into the market - and watch the profits roll in.

"Casual games are an impulse purchase," he says. "That's why so many US retailers started off putting casual titles with confectionary at point of purchase locations."

"A retailer has a tiny chance of selling *World Of Warcraft* to a 50-something housewife. But when it comes to *Bejeweled*, there's a real possibility she will risk £5 on something she'll see as far less intimidating."



### UPWARDLY MOBILE

Phone-based casual games might not seem to be able to offer video games retail many profit opportunities, but CEO of mobile games publisher I-Play David Gosen says that doesn't have to be the case:

"Last year, I-play launched Universal's *Fast & Furious: Tokyo* simultaneously alongside the movie release. We ran a 'try before you buy' initiative on display units in retail outlets including HMV, Asda and Tesco. The campaign encouraged consumers to 'Text I-play for a free game demo'. The campaign yielded a strong 8.2 per cent conversion rate from people who texted in for the demo and those who bought the game."

Games retailers should capitalise on their direct access to consumers by encouraging and educating consumers to try mobile content for the first time through offers such as free demos and games bundles."



## PERSONNEL

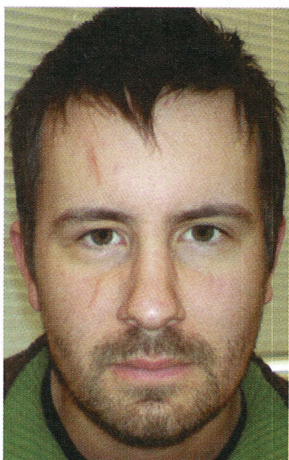
# Simply the Best for ELSPA

Industry body treats itself to a new events manager, as Geomerics hires industry veteran and former Take 2 boss Gary Lewis ● Meanwhile, more changes are afoot at Future Publishing and Sonopress...

**ELSPA** ■ BAFTA awards officer for games **DUNCAN BEST** has joined the publishers' association as events manager. Best's main duty will be to plan the upcoming London Games Festival, as well as working with the London Development Agency to secure future funding. He will also work with the ELSPA team to create future events for members.

At BAFTA, Best organised both the Games and Interactive Awards ceremonies, as well as organising press conferences with the nominees and ensuring that both events ran smoothly.

"I'm delighted to have been offered the opportunity to establish LGF," said Best.



*BEST IS YET TO COME: ELSPA is looking to new events man to plan London Games Festival*



*THERE ON 'MERIC: Gary Lewis takes over as CEO ahead of Games Developers Conference*

**GEOMERICS** ■ The Cambridge-based developer has appointed **GARY LEWIS** as CEO. Lewis has spent the last three years as chief operating officer of Take 2 in the US, and takes over his new role as Geomerics prepares to unveil its first radiosity solution product at GDC next month. Co-founder of the firm **CHRIS DORAN** has moved from CEO to COO to make room for Lewis' arrival.

Doran commented: "Appointing a CEO has been a major priority for us and we're delighted Gary has joined us. People of his calibre are few and far between. His vision, experience and clear-thinking will be invaluable to the success of Geomerics."

**FUTURE PUBLISHING** ■ *Official Nintendo Magazine* has made sweeping changes to its editorial staff after drafting in **MARTIN MATHERS** from Imagine Publishing's *nRevolution*.

**LEE NUTTER** has moved upstairs to the newly-created role of assistant publisher, making room for associate editor **CHANDRA NAIR** to become editor.

Mathers joins the mag as deputy editor, having previously been editor at Bournemouth-based Imagine's flagship title *GamesTM*, as well as *X360* and *nRevolution*.

"These changes are fantastic news for readers of *Official Nintendo Magazine*," said Future group publisher

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## PERSONNEL

# Buyer

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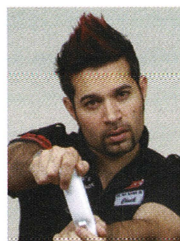
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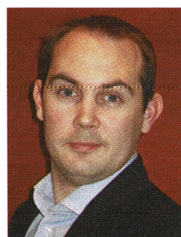
offering, and enables us to build the strongest possible team for the title."

Elsewhere in the company, **EMMA PARKINSON** has been appointed to the role of assistant publisher for *Xbox 360: The Official Magazine* and independent title *Xbox World 360*.

"I'm delighted to welcome Emma to our senior publishing team," said group publisher of Future's Microsoft portfolio James Binns. "She has done a superb job developing and establishing our Microsoft titles internationally. With her considerable skills and experience, she brings exciting new ideas to drive our UK titles forward."



Mia Walters. "Chandra played an essential supportive role to Lee throughout the launch and first year of the title and was the clear choice to continue *Official Nintendo Magazine's* development as editor. I'm also excited that Martin has chosen to further his career at Future, and will be the perfect addition to our team. His editorial experience will help to develop our



### SONOPRESS

**ARVATO** ■ The UK arm of the duplication and copy protection business has hired **SIMON STAINES** as supply chain development director. Staines is a former head of sales and marketing at distribution company The Entertainment Network and CD, DVD and video cassette duplication firm Cinram UK.

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# RETAIL ONLY

The retail section is the essential guide to keeping your store ahead of the game. This week, 2K Games is set to screech into the all format charts with its big movie licence Ghost Rider...

## GHOST RIDER



### **GHOST RIDER** P26

*He's on fire, on a motorbike and in a bad mood. And he's hitting retail soon*

### **TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED** P28

*After huge success on 360, Atari's racer comes to current-gen consoles*

### **DIGITAL DEVIL SAGA 2** P30

*This new Japanese RPG from Ghostlight is exciting the hardcore*

### **SUPREME COMMANDER** P31

*Real time strategy never looked so good - and it's a hit with the critics too*



# RECOMMENDED



**NO EASY RIDER:** He doesn't have the pecs of Superman or the dark air of mystery surrounding Batman, but Ghost Rider is zooming into cinemas – and onto consoles – next month



The latest comic book hero to head to the silver screen is Ghost Rider. And 2K Games has cleverly snapped up the games rights. **Neil Long** reports...

**COMIC** book heroes are a troubled bunch. Batman and Spider-Man are both tortured souls with dead parents, but that's nothing compared to Superman – everyone on his home planet is dead, the poor lamb. And he's got a split personality.

And don't even get started with the X-Men – they're mutants, for God's sake. Unsurprisingly, not many of them are particularly happy about it either. You wouldn't want to go for a pint with any of them. Plus, Storm may be a bit of a minx, but you wouldn't want a blow job from her...

While perhaps it's clear to see why they are not exactly the most fun-loving bunch, all that angst and mental disorder does make for interesting reading. And there's a whole universe

make the transition from the comic store to the big screen and then of course onto consoles is Ghost Rider, who comes complete with the required troubled past and bad attitude.

“



**Our target market is split three ways - there are the film-goers, comic fans and the PSP users.**

**Ben Payne, 2K Games**

”

of these kinds of characters – HellBoy, Daredevil, Elektra, Hulk, The Phantom, the list goes on. The latest hero to

And the chaps at 2K Games were the ones smart enough to snap up the rights to the game incarnation – the

movie, which stars Hollywood A-listers Nicholas Cage and Eva Mendes, will certainly be generating plenty of hype when it is released in UK cinemas on March 2nd. And 2K Games product manager has plans to create a bit of buzz too.

## COMIC RELIEF

“Our target market is split three ways, there are the film-goers, comic fans – which is a market that shouldn't be ignored – and there's PSP users too,” he told *MCV*. “Our advertising is aimed at those three types of people so we've



# GHOST RIDER

got specialist press ads for the PSP version, while we're advertising in Panini and Marvel comics to hit the franchise's fans. We're nationwide in cinemas, and outdoor is another big bulk of our budget."

## A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

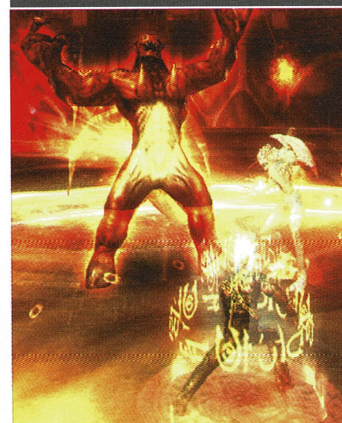
So the hype machine is being revved up right now – and it'll undoubtedly be assisted by plenty of noise around the movie. 2K hasn't stopped there. "We've been able to tie up a lot on the PR side too," adds Payne. "There's all sorts of press linking the movie to the game."

"We've got a cover on *OPSM2* which is the first time that 2K Games has got a licensed product on the cover of what is still the biggest selling games mag in the UK. It quantifies how well that game has been received. Other comic-based games have hit their peak of late with a few disappointing titles, but this proves that *Ghost Rider* is different."

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 23RD  
**FORMATS:** PSP, PS2 AND GBA  
**PUBLISHER:** 2K GAMES  
**DEVELOPER:** CLIMAX  
**PRICE:** £29.99 on PS2 and PSP,  
 £19.99 on GBA  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** GEM  
**CONTACT:** 01753 496600

## THE BATTLE PLAN

The game itself adopts two different gameplay styles. The first is a mixture of *Devil May Cry* style fighting, in which gamers grapple with Ghost Rider's trademark hellfire chain and shotgun as well as his superhuman strength, speed and durability. It's all upgradeable too, with new moves unlockable based on the more enemies you defeat. The second is based around high speed motorbike sections, within which gamers can attack and bring down enemies on Ghost Rider's fetching Hell Cycle. On top of all this, the PSP version has a nifty four-player wi-fi mode, which only requires one UMD to play.

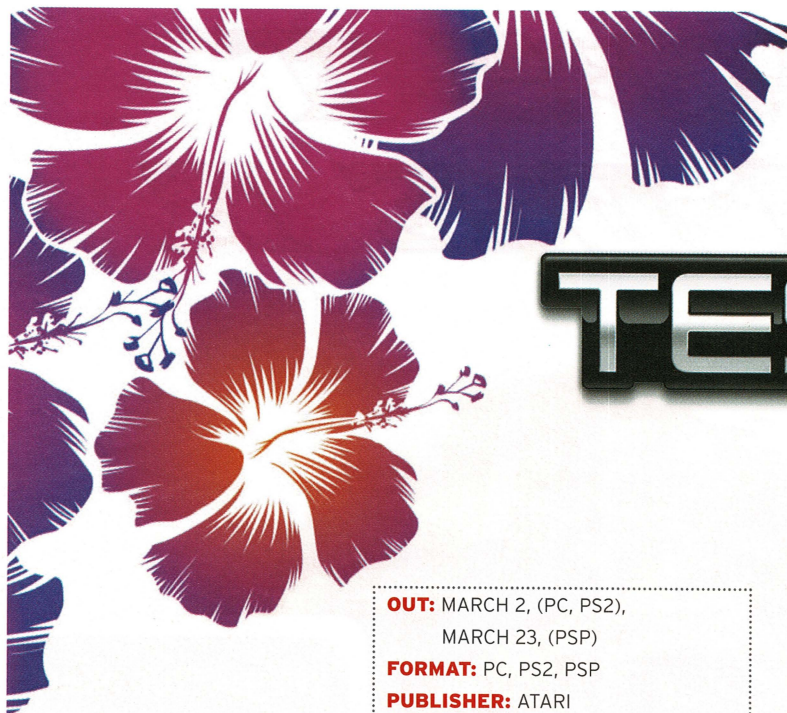


## RIDING PILLION

With a history that includes cult hit *Tron 2.0* and most recently *Moto GP '06*, developer Climax has inspired great confidence in publishing partner 2K games. "I think the critical success *Ghost Rider* has had is linked to it having been developed by Climax," says 2K Games product manager Ben Payne. "For a start they're down on the south coast and not on the other side of the world, so we've had access to them and from our side we can communicate better the USPs of the game."



## RECOMMENDED



# TEST DRIVE

*Unlimited*

**OUT:** MARCH 2, (PC, PS2),  
MARCH 23, (PSP)  
**FORMAT:** PC, PS2, PSP  
**PUBLISHER:** ATARI  
**DEVELOPER:** EDEN  
**PRICE:** £29.99 (PC); £39.99 (PS2);  
£34.99 (PSP)  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** ADVANTAGE  
**CONTACT:** 020 8222 9700



**DAS BOOT:** The sexy rear views that 360 owners have been able to show off since last October will be nearly identical on the PC version of TDU, according to Atari

After making a splash on Xbox 360, Atari's super slick racer has made a handbrake turn onto PS2, PSP and PC. **David McCarthy** revs his engine...

**WHEN** *Test Drive Unlimited* was originally released on the Xbox 360, *Edge* called it "a beguiling, intoxicating hymn to the open road".

They weren't the only critics mesmerised by the game's fumes, or by its thousand-odd miles of open roads, or by its 90 licensed vehicles from exclusive manufacturers such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, Aston Martin, Mercedes, and Jaguar.

#### CHANGING GEAR

Which is good news for PC owners, because the soon-to-be-released PC version is "effectively the same game as the Xbox 360 version with an extra mode thrown in for good measure", according to Atari product manager, Grant Tasker.

It will also support 'Track IR technology' – whatever that is – which will apparently allow an "even more realistic and immersive experience", according to Tasker.

But while the PC version squeals off in an ever-more realistic direction, the PS2 and PSP versions will be taking a different route.

"*Test Drive Unlimited* on PS2 and PSP differs from the other versions in a variety of ways," explains Tasker.

"Where you could argue that the Xbox 360 and PC versions are simulation focused, the PS2 and PSP versions are more like arcade racers.

"Both the PS2 and the PSP versions still allow players to experience online racing and interaction, but now they both operate with a master points

“



*The message remains that Test Drive Unlimited is racing reinvented and an amazing games experience.*

**Grant Tasker, Atari**

”

"Developed by Eden, who brought us the Xbox 360 game, the PC version allows gamers to experience Oahu's seamless online connection and unlimited challenges and opponents."

#### CIRCUIT TRAINING

In addition to containing everything that the 360 version does, PC gamers will also be granted access to a new 'Hardcore Mode', which uses telemetric data detailing actual physics modeled on real life parameters (meaning a more realistic handling model including independent grip for each tyre, weight transfer with G-meter, suspension and so on).

system where players are rewarded for general driving, racing, drifting, slipstreaming and getting air and so on which go toward unlocking new challenges and races."

Also exclusive to the PS2 and PSP versions of the game is a 'Quick Race' option, which allows players to generate challenges without having to go looking for them in the game world.

Tasker points out that all versions of the game will feature the hallmark features that wowed the critics the first time round: "They all feature the same glorious gaming environment on the beautiful island of Oahu – complete



ATARI

with the biggest network of diverse open roads ever seen in a video game and delivered to gamers as a fully streaming racing experience with no loading times.

"Plus, the limitless number of challenges and races for gamers to put their skills to the test remains – not to mention the lifestyle element of the game, which is consistent across all the platforms. You can buy new homes and fill the garages with more and more vehicles."

#### GONE AND BONNET

Given the continued success of the 360 original, Tasker has no reason not to expect a similar level of success on the new platforms. Nevertheless, the game will still be supported with a huge PR and marketing campaign.

A community website was launched last month to host realtime leaderboards and player profiles, and the game will be promoted with a "heavyweight lifestyle and motoring print campaign". This will see advertorials in *Nuts*, *Zoo*, *Monkey*, *Max Power*, *Evo*, *Fast Car* and *Redline* magazines, backed up by ads in the specialist press.

"The message remains that *Test Drive Unlimited* is racing reinvented and now offers an amazing gaming experience for each of the format owners," says Tasker.

"Every version we have released pushes the capabilities of the system that it plays on to the max."

#### UNLIMITED FASHION

As part of *Test Drive Unlimited*'s 'lifestyle element' that Tasker describes, the game features a tie-in with fashion brand Ben Sherman. The game includes Ben Sherman menswear, taken from the label's Spring / Summer '06 collection, which is, according to the *Clothes Show*-style press release, "Designed around the theme 'The Big Beat', inspired by the Ska, Rude Boy and Two Tone music cultures of the late 70's and 80's." No wonder Atari's PR team is up for an award...

#### UNLIMITED PR

If you've not already heard about *Test Drive Unlimited*'s redefinition of the racing genre, you've got no excuse: not only has it already been released on the Xbox 360 and received rave reviews, but Atari was recently named a finalist in the the *PRWeek* Awards over in the US for the game's PR campaign. It's up for the Excellence In The Public Relations Field in the Arts, Entertainment & Media category. Winners will be announced at a gala ceremony to be held at Tavern on the Green in New York City, on March 8.





## RECOMMENDED

GHOSTLIGHT



There's another Japanese RPG on its way. It doesn't come from the Square-Enix stable, but the series is claiming an equally dedicated following. **Mark Walbank** reports...



**THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL:** The RPG series from Atlus has gained a dedicated fanbase from all over the world



FOR A JAPANESE RPG to make it over to the West it has to be good. All that text, all that translation... "all your base are belong to us"... you know what can happen. One thing's for sure – if RPG fans don't like it and the game bombs, you can kiss goodbye to a sequel. But one series gaining a firm foothold over here is Atlus' strange and enchanting *Digital Devil Saga* franchise.

While earlier games in the series (*Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne* and the first *Digital Devil Saga*) never truly connected with the mainstream, they picked up a dedicated fan base and accolades from hardened RPGers the world over. A robust battle system, outlandish characters and a plot which touched on deeper existential issues made this stand out from the super deformed characters and goblins we usually associate with the genre.

#### THE DEVIL'S WORK

Publisher Ghostlight is aware of the series' cult status and is backing the game with promotion on all major European gaming sites and a £30k

specialist press marketing budget. "The marketing campaign for *Digital Devil Saga 2* is firmly targeted at the core gamer," states Adrian Clews, Ghostlight's marketing executive. "By staying focused on our target market and meeting their needs, such as the introduction of a fantastic Collectors Edition, we are confident *Digital Devil Saga 2* will be the success its quality demands."

Cleverly this sequel will reward dedicated fans by allowing them to transfer saved information across from

**We're focused on our target market and are confident *Digital Devil Saga 2* will be the success its quality demands.**

**Adrian Clews, Ghostlight**



the first *Digital Devil Saga* title. Though extra funds, a harder difficulty setting and some additional plot twists will delight those who left data on their memory cards,

Ghostlight promises a superbly balanced and gripping experience for those who haven't explored the universe before.

**OUT:** FEBRUARY 23

**FORMAT:** PS2

**PUBLISHER:** GHOSTLIGHT

**DEVELOPER:** ATLUS

**PRICE:** £29.95

£34.95 (COLLECTORS EDITION)

**DISTRIBUTOR:** OPEN

**CONTACT:** 01279 858016

And some universe it is. After battling with the tribes of Junkyard to reach Nirvana, hero Serph finds his world has vanished along with his companions.

The sequel takes up his struggle to go beyond Nirvana, rid himself of his demonic powers and find his friends. It's a rich tapestry supported by an even deeper battle system and character upgrades.

With 40 plus hours of honed gameplay and a total revamp to the battle system *Digital Devil Saga 2* promises a deeper more customisable experience than previous iterations.

This may not be one of the most recognised brands in the world but where European publisher Ghostlight is concerned, you can always expect a title that is deep, deep, deep.

#### GOT TO COLLECT 'EM ALL

Two versions of the game will be available on release – the standard at £29.99 and *Collectors Edition* at £34.99. The latter contains six collectable art cards highlighting the distinctive style of the game and a bonus 30 track music CD. Considering the dedicated following, yet the limited release that many Atlus games get, don't expect the *Collectors Edition* to be in stock for long, though...

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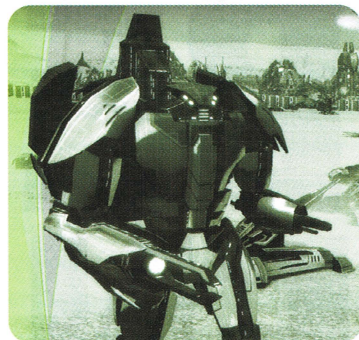
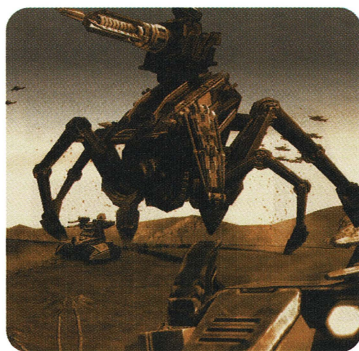
www.gem.co.uk

01279 822822



## RECOMMENDED

THQ



**SEXY MACHINE:** Gamers can zoom in on the tiniest graphical detail of each robot, or instantly widen the camera to get an overview of the battlefield

## SUPREME COMMANDER

THQ's new gun-heavy RTS was a big winner at last year's E3 - and should be a hit with anyone with a penchant for giant mechanical spiders. And let's face it, who hasn't? **Mark Walbank** does the robot...

**THE LETTERS** RTS are often instantly filed under the term 'torturous drudgery' by even the most serious of gamers. But if there's one developer that's taken the RTS to new heights and transformed it from tank rush hell to sophisticated sandbox it's Gas Powered Games. Responsible for the ground breaking *Total Annihilation* and the splendidly compulsive *Dungeon Siege* series, those guys clearly know how to make tactics enjoyable.

**MIGHTY MAPS**

*Supreme Commander* is the studio's latest war-fest, a game so vast and comprehensive that it's had the specialist press in raptures and was awarded Strategy Game of the Year at E3. Put simply, the battle maps in *Supreme Commander* are on a scale never before seen in an RTS. They're so huge, scrolling the mouse wheel to

from an abstraction of a board game and have the big and small all combined together in one experience."

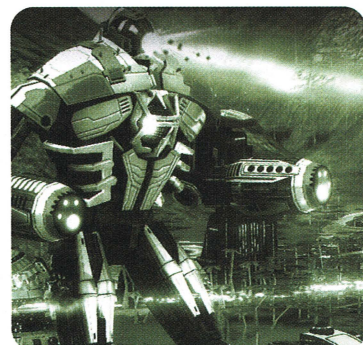
**MAN MACHINES**

If you get off on big robots you'll be delighted to hear the huge scale wars are supported by a robust engine capable of picking up minute details on units, yet powerful enough to zoom out for a picturesque bird's eye view. Part of the game's appeal is the ability to watch units react and interact, such as giant machines crushing anything underfoot and soldiers with jetpacks leaping over land defences.

**SUPREMELY TALENTED**

It's been ten years since *Total Annihilation* revitalised the RTS genre so the release of *Supreme Commander* couldn't be more timely.

A comprehensive multiplayer mode is

**OUT:** FEBRUARY 16**FORMAT:** PC**PUBLISHER:** THQ**DEVELOPER:** GAS POWERED GAMES**PRICE:** £29.99**DISTRIBUTOR:** ADVANTAGE**CONTACT:** 01483 767656**HONOUR OF MEDALS**

Here are just a few of the accolades that *Supreme Commander* has picked up on its journey to release:

**Best Strategy Game of E3**  
(Game Critics Award)

**Finalist - Best Game of E3**  
(GameSpot)

**Best Strategy Game of E3**  
(Game Critics Award)

**Nominee, PC Game of Show**  
(IGN)

**1st Runner Up - Best Strategy Game of E3**  
(IGN)

**Runner Up - Most Innovative Design**  
(IGN PC)

**Runner Up - Technical Excellence**  
(IGN PC)

**Top 10 PC Games of E3**  
(GameSpy)

**Top 5 PC Games of E3**  
(GamesRadar)

“*Supreme Commander* will deliver an exciting, accessible gaming experience on a huge scope and scale.

**Chris Taylor,  
Gas Powered Games**

zoom out then moving from one side of the landscape to the other is a tactical decision in itself.

'Bigger and better' was clearly a driving principle behind the creation of *Supreme Commander*.

"When I was in high school we liked Risk so we took a ping-pong table and covered it in cardboard," explains Chris Taylor, founder of Gas Powered Games.

"We drew the Risk board to scale, because the original just wasn't big enough. That's where my head has always been - bigger maps, more units in the fight, and scale differences, like the giant Spiders gamers get to grips with in *Supreme Commander*.

"Small units can go under their legs and even be stepped on. To me, it gets more interesting when you move away

undoubtedly the focus, but the icing on the cake is an enticing story campaign that can also be played cooperatively with a friend.

"Our goal with this franchise is to take the RTS experience into the future," concludes Taylor.

"*Supreme Commander* will deliver an exciting, accessible gaming experience on a huge scope and scale that will allow players to wield unprecedented control over the entire theatre of war."

With such a healthy features list and Chris Taylor at the helm, *Supreme Commander* isn't just a tempting proposition for strategy fans - it's downright indispensable.



**ARACHNOPHOBIA:** Gas Powered Games' Chris Taylor says that the spiders in *Supreme Commander* tower over human-controlled characters



# THE PLACE TO BE SEEN



April sees the publication of 2007's **Develop 100**.

A unique guide to the fluctuating fortunes of the world's development studios, it provides an invaluable snapshot of the creative landscape. The 2005 and 2006 editions were devoured and discussed by everyone in the business of games.

The 2007 version will be published with the April edition of **Develop** and will exclusively reveal how everyone from EA Canada (2006's No.1) to Hudson (No.100) has performed in the past 12 months.

Published with April edition of **Develop**

Published with relevant copies of **MCV** April 5th

Extended distribution at **Develop in Brighton Conference (July)**

Extended distribution at **Develop Industry Excellence Awards**

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## HIGH STREET UPDATE

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## INDIE STORE FOCUS

OWNING an indie store in a central London location will always bring large overheads and no shortage of competition. But N1 Games, just off the Capital's trendy Upper Street, has managed to fend off these problems through a mix of clever pricing and a well-nurtured relationship with suppliers – leaving it in a strong position to eagerly anticipate the launch of PS3.

"I'm really looking forward to PS3 because our previous experience with dealing with Centresoft on major new products is very good," says N1 Games owner Sam Seamaan. "We know we'll get the support and the service from



them we need. We're not taking pre-orders, but we are taking names and addresses."

Seamaan estimates that just 20 to 30 per cent of his one

store business is made up of pre-owned software – and that he can genuinely compete on price against N1's High Street chain rivals.

## N1 GAMES

## Address:

25 Baron Street,  
Angel,  
London,  
N1 9ET

## Telephone:

020 7713 7979

"We've got a GAME and Woolworths up the road, but we can drop prices on new releases and still make a small margin on each game," he says. "We sell new Xbox 360 titles for £39.99 and we are often complimented by customers on how our pre-owned prices compare to other stores.

"GAME sends customers over if they can't find what they want, or wish to use our console and disc repair service."

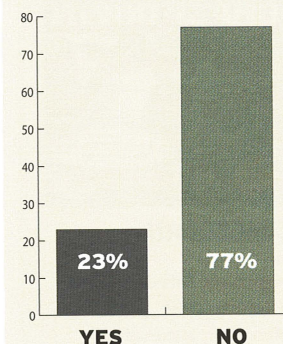
**If you would like your indie store to be featured contact**  
**tim.ingham@intentmedia.co.uk**

## WORD ON THE STREET

In conjunction with Channel Games, MCV poses a question to a number of High Street retailers every week...

## QUESTION:

Are you concerned about the threat of digital downloads?



Over three quarters of a buoyant High Street plays down the potential effect of online downloads.

(77 stores asked)

## POINT OF SALE



## Call of Duty 3

Inlays ■ Launch posters ■ Pillar posters ■ Cubes ■ Dummy box (PS2) ■ Dummy box (Wii) ■ Standees ■ Banner

ACTIVISION.



## Pro Evolution Soccer 6

PC sleeves ■ PS2 sleeves ■ Xbox 360 sleeves ■ Wobblers ■ Lenticular posters ■ A1 window stickers ■ A3 window stickers ■ A4 window stickers ■ A5 window stickers ■ New posters ■ Standees

KONAMI



## Football Manager 2007

Wobblers ■ Posters (PC/Mac) ■ Posters (consoles) ■ Standees

SEGA



## Gears Of War

Standees ■ Posters ■ Cubes ■ Boxes ■ Inlays

Microsoft

## Viva Pinata

POS kits ■ FSDU ■ Boxes ■ Console wraps

CHANNEL GAMES

All of the merchandise listed is available from Channel Games. For further details, simply log on to its dedicated POS online store

www.gamespos.com. For all your retail, merchandising and POS requirements, please call Jonathan Dunnett on 07812 353116, or email him on jdunnett@channelgames.co.uk

## PRICE CHECK DURHAM

GAME	Wii Play	Rainbow Six: Vegas	Arthur & The Invisibles	Rocky Balboa	New Super Mario Bros.
STORE	Wii	360	PS2	PSP	DS
Channel Games	N/A	£44.99	£29.99	£34.99	£29.99
Woolworths	N/A	£44.99	£27.99	£34.99	£29.99
Gamestation	£34.99	£39.99	£29.99	£34.99	£29.99
HMV	£34.95	£39.95	£27.95	£29.95	£29.95
ASDA	£34.96	N/A	£24.77	£29.97	N/A

## ONLINE

amazon.co.uk	£39.99	£32.99	£29.99	£29.99	£24.99
PLAYCOM	N/A	£37.99	£29.99	£29.99	£24.99

Gamestation, HMV and Amazon might be proudly displaying *Wii Play* on their shelves in the North East, but the majority of retailers we spoke to don't have the title in-store – suggesting a free stock situation is some way off.

Deals of the week are at Asda, which offers Atari's *Arthur And The Invisibles* for just under £25, and Amazon, where *Rainbow Six Vegas* is £17 less than its list price. Online sites beat their High Street rivals by a fiver on *Super Mario Bros.*

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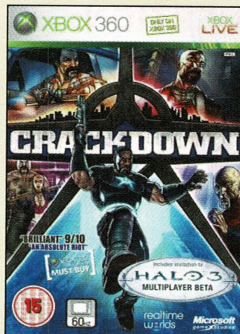


## RETAIL ONLY NEW RELEASES

# The drought is over - it's triple-A time

Big-hitting titles such as Crackdown, FFXII, Ghost Rider, PES6 DS, Digital Devil Saga and Test Drive bring retail to life

## [MUST STOCK]



### CRACKDOWN

**Released:** February 23rd  
**Formats:** 360  
**Publisher:** Microsoft  
**Distributor:** Gem  
**Contact:** 08706 010100

Liken any title to *Grand Theft Auto* and you're almost guaranteed some interest. But in the case of *Crackdown* the hype is justified. Think *GTA* but add in superhero powers, an advanced physics engine and cel-shading and you'll get a fair idea of the possibilities on offer.



### FINAL FANTASY XII

**Released:** February 23rd  
**Formats:** PS2  
**Publisher:** Square Enix  
**Distributor:** Koch  
**Contact:** 08700 270985

It's staggering that a series with such a fine pedigree continues to surprise gamers. Despite the fact that it's now twelve instalments old (thirteen if you count *FFX-2*) Square Enix's latest still manages to be the most beautiful *Final Fantasy* to date, whilst losing none of the epicness fans have come to expect of the franchise.

TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR
<b>FEBRUARY 16TH</b>					
<i>Arma: Armed Assault</i>	PC	Shooter	505 Games	01908 607772	Advantage
<i>Arthur And The Invisibles</i>	PSP	Kids	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage
<i>Bomberman Land Touch</i>	DS	Puzzle	Rising Star	01462 477303	Centresoft
<i>Deep Labyrinth</i>	DS	Puzzle	505 Games	01908 607772	Advantage
<i>God Hand</i>	PS2	Action	Capcom	020 8846 2250	Open
<i>Hammy Goes Nuts</i>	PSP	Action	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Hot Wheels All Out</i>	GBA	Racing	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>Lumines Plus</i>	PS2	Puzzle	BVG	020 8222 1000	Centresoft
<i>Mario Slam Basketball</i>	DS	Sports	Nintendo	08700 270977	Koch
<i>Postman Pat</i>	PC	Kids	The Game Factory	08703 514352	Pinnacle
<i>Postman Pat: And the Greendale Rocket</i>	GBA	Kids	The Game Factory	08703 514352	Pinnacle
<i>Shrek: Smash 'N' Crash</i>	PS2/GBA	Racing	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Supreme Commander</i>	PC	Action	THQ	01483 767656	Advantage
<i>TOCA Race Driver 3 Challenge</i>	PSP	Racing	Codemasters	01926 814132	Centresoft

## FEBRUARY 23RD

<i>Blitz: The League</i>	Xbox 360	Sports	Midway	020 7382 7720	Pinnacle
<i>Crackdown</i>	360	Driving/Action	Microsoft	08706 010100	Gem
<i>EA Replay</i>	PSP	Retro	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle
<i>Final Fantasy XII</i>	PS2	RPG	Square Enix	08700 270985	Koch
<i>Fossil League</i>	PS2	Action	D3Publisher	01223 322015	Open
<i>Ghost Rider</i>	PS2/PSP/GBA	Action	Take 2	01753 496600	Gem
<i>International Tennis Pro</i>	PS2/PC	Sports	Midas	01279 858000	Open
<i>Kororinpa</i>	Wii	Puzzle	Nintendo	08700 270977	Koch
<i>Midway Arcade Treasures Deluxe</i>	PC	Retro	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>My Frogger Toy Trials</i>	DS	Platform	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>Pippa Funnell 3: The Golden Stirrup Challenge</i>	PC	Adventure	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Princess Natasha</i>	DS	Kid's	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>Pro Evolution Soccer 6</i>	DS	Sport	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>Resident Evil 4</i>	PC	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Samurai Police</i>	PS2	Action	Midas	01279 858000	Open
<i>Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga 2</i>	PS2	Action	Ghostlight	01279 858000	Open
<i>Skate Attack</i>	PS2	Action	Midas	01279 858000	Open
<i>Spin Out</i>	PSP	Arcade	Ghostlight	01279 858000	Open
<i>Test Drive Unlimited</i>	PS2/PC/PSP	Racing	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage
<i>The Warriors</i>	PSP	Action	Rockstar	01753 496600	Gem
<i>Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas</i>	PSP	Action	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>VFR Real Scenery 1</i>	PC	Flight Sim	Just Flight	08452 342471	Gem
<i>Wild Earth Africa</i>	PC	Adventure	Xplosiv	020 8343 7337	Open
<i>World Championship Poker 2</i>	PS2/PC	Sim	Oxygen	01933 442660	Open
<i>WWII: Aces of the Sky</i>	PC	Sim	Midas	01279 858000	Open
<i>WWII: Battle Over Europe</i>	PS2	Sim	Midas	01279 858000	Open

## FEBRUARY MISC

<i>Sherlock Holmes 3</i>	PC	Adventure	93 Games	01675 422331	Ascaron
<i>Silverfall</i>	PC	Adventure	Monte Cristo	08700 270985	Koch
<i>Tortuga - Two Treasures</i>	PC	Strategy	CDV	01675 422331	Ascaron

## MARCH 2ND

<i>Ant Bully</i>	Wii	Adventure	Midway	020 7382 7720	Pinnacle
<i>Dancing Stage SuperNova</i>	PS2	Dancing	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>Danny Phantom Urban Jungle</i>	DS	Action	THQ	01483 767656	Advantage
<i>Jade Empire Special Edition</i>	PC	RPG	Take 2	01753 496600	Gem
<i>Red Star</i>	PS2	Action	Take 2	01753 496600	Gem
<i>The Sims 2 Seasons</i>	PC	Sim	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle
<i>Titan Quest Deluxe</i>	PC	Adventure	THQ	01483 767656	Advantage
<i>Titan Quest: GOLD</i>	PC	Adventure	THQ	01483 767656	Advantage
<i>Titan Quest: Immortal Throne</i>	PC	Adventure	THQ	01483 767656	Advantage



## RETAIL ONLY NEW RELEASES

TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR
<i>Xiaolin Showdown</i>	DS	Action	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Tag Force</i>	PSP	Action	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open

## MARCH 9TH

<i>Battlestations Midway</i>	360/PC	Sim	Eidos	020 8636 3000	Centresoft
<i>Bullet Witch</i>	360	Horror	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage
<i>Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin</i>	DS	Platform	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>CSI 3 Dimensions of Murder</i>	PS2	Adventure	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Dragon Ball Z Budokai Tenkaichi 2 Platinum</i>	PS2	Action	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage
<i>Garfield's Nightmare</i>	DS	Kids	The Game Factory	08703 514352	Pinnacle
<i>Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2</i>	360	Action	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Mario vs Donkey Kong 2</i>	DS	Puzzle	Nintendo	08700 270977	Koch
<i>Peter Pan</i>	PS2	Kids	Phoenix	31 40 3681005	Open
<i>Scrabble 2007</i>	PC	Puzzle	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Sniper Assault</i>	PS2	Action	Phoenix	31 40 3681005	Open
<i>Uno</i>	GBA	Puzzle	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>Winx Club: Join the Club</i>	PSP	Action	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>WWC World Wrestling Championship</i>	PS2	Sports	Phoenix	31 40 3681005	Open

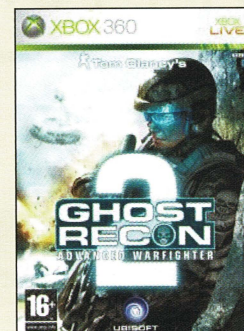
## MARCH 16TH

<i>Asphalt 2</i>	PSP	Racing	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Call Of Duty 2 Game of the Year Edition Classic</i>	Xbox	FPS	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Call Of Duty 3</i>	PS3	FPS	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>CSI Hard Evidence</i>	PC	Kids	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Dogz 2</i>	GBA	Kids	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Free Running</i>	PS2/PSP	Sports	Reef	01908 487 587	Open
<i>Freedom Wings</i>	DS	Action	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>Hard Rock Casino</i>	PS2/PSP	Gambling	Oxygen	01933 442660	Open
<i>Harley Davidson</i>	PS2/PC	Racing	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Lionel Trains</i>	DS	Action	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>Lunar Knights</i>	DS	Action	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open
<i>Marvel: Ultimate Alliance</i>	PS3	RPG	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Phoenix Wright: Justice for All</i>	DS	Puzzle	Nintendo	08700 270977	Koch
<i>Pimp My Ride</i>	PS2/PSP/360	Racing	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords</i>	PSP/DS	Puzzle	D3Publisher	01223 322015	Open
<i>Rapala Tournament Fishing</i>	Wii/360	Sim	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Rayman Raving Rabbids</i>	DS	Action	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Samurai Warriors 2</i>	PS2/360	Action	KOEI	01462 476130	Open
<i>Shrek: Smash 'N' Crash</i>	DS/PSP	Racing	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Sid Meiers Pirates</i>	PSP	Strategy	Take 2	01753 496600	Gem
<i>Silent Hunter 4</i>	PC	Action	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Spectrobes</i>	DS	RPG	BVG	020 8222 1000	Centresoft
<i>SSX Blur</i>	Wii	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle
<i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</i>	DS	Action	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>The Grim Adventures Of Billy And Mandy</i>	Wii	Adventure	Midway	020 7382 7720	Pinnacle
<i>Tony Hawk's Project 8</i>	PSP/PS3	Skateboarding	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Uno Compilation</i>	DS	Puzzle	Zoo Digital	01142 413700	Open
<i>World Series of Poker: Tournament Champions</i>	Wii	Poker	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft

## MARCH 23RD

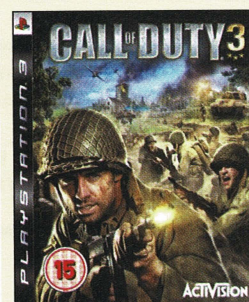
<i>All Star Fighters</i>	PS2	Action	D3Publisher	01223 322015	Open
<i>Bionicle Heroes</i>	Wii	Action	Eidos	020 8636 3000	Centresoft
<i>Blazing Angels</i>	PS3	Sim	Ubisoft	01932 578000	Pinnacle
<i>Brian Lara's Cricket 2007</i>	360/PS2/PC	Sport	Codemasters	01926 814132	Centresoft
<i>Bubble Bobble Double Shot</i>	PSP	Platform	Rising Star	01462 477303	Centresoft
<i>Call Of Duty 3 GOLD</i>	360	FPS	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Call of Duty 3: Roads to Victory</i>	PSP	Action	Activision	020 3060 1000	Centresoft
<i>Capcom Puzzle World</i>	PSP	Puzzle	Capcom	020 8846 2250	Open
<i>Darwin</i>	PS2	RTS	D3Publisher	01223 322015	Open
<i>Dead Eye Jim</i>	PS2	Action	Phoenix	31 40 3681005	Open

## [MUST STOCK]

GHOST RECON  
ADVANCED  
WARFIGHTER 2

**Released:** March 9th  
**Formats:** 360  
**Publisher:** Ubisoft  
**Distributor:** Pinnacle  
**Contact:** 01932 578000

It's still massively popular online and is often quoted as one of the best titles to date on Xbox 360, but *Advanced Warfighter* is about to be given a run for its money by this new sequel. This game is will definitely perform strongly at retail.



## CALL OF DUTY 3

**Released:** March 16th  
**Formats:** PS3  
**Publisher:** Activision  
**Distributor:** Centresoft  
**Contact:** 020 3060 1000

Yes, it's hard to believe but already PS3 titles have begun to appear in the New Releases pages. As has become tradition, Activision has chosen to release its first batch of titles a week before the hardware hits the shops, much as it did with PSP and Wii.



## RETAIL ONLY CHARTS

## OFFICIAL UK CHARTS

## WII [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>WARIO WARE: SMOOTH MOVES</b> DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO	
2	1	<b>WII PLAY</b>	NINTENDO
3	3	<b>LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS</b>	NINTENDO
4	4	<b>RED STEEL</b>	UBISOFT
5	5	<b>RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS</b>	UBISOFT
6	7	<b>SUPER MONKEY BALL: BANANA BLITZ</b>	SEGA
7	6	<b>CALL OF DUTY 3</b>	ACTIVISION
8	8	<b>NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON</b>	EA
9	9	<b>MONSTER 4X4 WORLD CIRCUIT</b>	UBISOFT
10	10	<b>MARVEL ULTIMATE ALLIANCE</b>	ACTIVISION

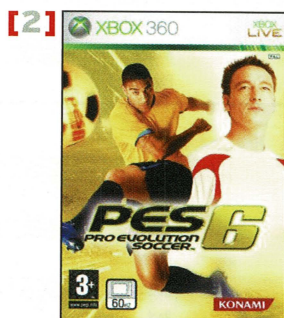
## NINTENDO DS [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>NEW SUPER MARIO BROS</b> DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO	
2	2	<b>DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING</b>	NINTENDO
3	8	<b>STAR FOX COMMAND</b>	NINTENDO
4	3	<b>ZOO TYCOON DS</b>	THQ
5	4	<b>ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD</b>	NINTENDO
6	5	<b>BIG BRAIN ACADEMY</b>	NINTENDO
7	13	<b>NINTENDOGS: DALMATIANS</b>	NINTENDO
8	7	<b>THE SIMS 2</b>	EA
9	11	<b>PIPPA FUNNELL DS</b>	UBISOFT
10	9	<b>THE SIMS 2: PETS</b>	EA

## PSP [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>ROCKY BALBOA</b> DEVELOPER: UBISOFT PUBLISHER: UBISOFT	
2	1	<b>GTA: VICE CITY STORIES</b>	ROCKSTAR
3	2	<b>PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6</b>	KONAMI
4	4	<b>NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON</b>	EA
5	6	<b>FIFA 07</b>	EA
6	7	<b>MEDAL OF HONOR: HEROES</b>	EA
7	8	<b>WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2007</b>	THQ
8	5	<b>WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2007</b>	SEGA
9	9	<b>SONIC RIVALS</b>	SEGA
10	10	<b>LEGO STAR WARS II</b>	LUCASARTS

[SOURCE]



## [ENTERTAINMENT - FULL PRICE]

## TOP 40 ALL

1		<b>LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION</b> FORMAT: 360 DEVELOPER: CAPCOM PUBLISHER: CAPCOM	
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
2	3	<b>PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6</b> PS2, 360, PC, PSP, XBOX	KONAMI
3	2	<b>FIFA 07</b> PS2, PC, PSP, 360, DS, XBOX	EA
4	NEW	<b>SEGA MEGA DRIVE COLLECTION</b> PSP, PS2	SEGA
5	6	<b>WARIO WARE: SMOOTH MOVES</b> WII	NINTENDO
6	8	<b>NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON</b> PS2, PSP, 360, XBOX	EA
7	4	<b>WII PLAY</b> WII	NINTENDO
8	11	<b>NEW SUPER MARIO BROS</b> DS	NINTENDO
9	9	<b>CARS</b> PS2, PSP, DS, GBA, XBOX	THQ
10	12	<b>THE SIMS 2: PETS</b> PS2, PC, GC, XBOX, DS	EA
11	13	<b>LEGO STAR WARS II</b> PS2, 360, DS, PC, XBOX, PSP, GC	LUCASARTS
12	10	<b>CALL OF DUTY 3</b> 360, PS2, WII	ACTIVISION
13	21	<b>ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS</b> WII, GC	NINTENDO
14	NEW	<b>LITTLE BRITAIN: THE VIDEO GAME</b> PS2, PC	BLAST
15	14	<b>CANIS CANEM EDIT</b> PS2	ROCKSTAR
16	16	<b>WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2007</b> PS2, 360	THQ
17	7	<b>WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2007</b> PS2, PSP, 360	SEGA
18	5	<b>WOW: THE BURNING CRUSADE</b> PC	BLIZZARD
19	15	<b>THE SIMS 2</b> PS2, XBOX, DS, PC, GC	EA
20	19	<b>GEARS OF WAR</b> 360	MICROSOFT

## PLAYSTATION 2 [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6</b> DEVELOPER: KONAMI PUBLISHER: KONAMI	
2	5	<b>NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON</b>	EA
3	8	<b>SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS</b>	VIVENDI
4	4	<b>LEGO STAR WARS II</b>	LUCASARTS
5	3	<b>FIFA 07</b>	EA
6	9	<b>WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2007</b>	THQ
7	1	<b>WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2007</b>	SEGA
8	10	<b>BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ</b>	SONY
9	7	<b>BUZZ! JUNIOR: JUNGLE PARTY</b>	SONY
10	6	<b>CALL OF DUTY 3</b>	ACTIVISION



## [ANALYSIS]



AS THE NATION freezes thanks to a belated cold snap, it seems Capcom's new ice-cool shooter *Lost Planet* certainly hasn't had a frosty reception at retail.

Plenty of TV ads and specialist press attention means that it has outsold Konami and EA cash cows *Pro Evo* and *FIFA* once again - a pretty impressive feat for a 360 exclusive.

This week's new entries have done pretty well too - Sega's Mega Drive retro compilation performed admirably to gatecrash the top five, and the chaps over at Blast will be ecstatic with a number 14 spot for its *Little Britain* game, while *Star Fox* and *Rocky* weigh in at 26 and 27 respectively.

Neil Long

[WEEK ENDING 03/02/07]

(c) ELSPA, Compiled by ChartTrack

# FORMATS

■ Highest New Entry ■ Highest Top 40 Climber

21	17	DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING DS	NINTENDO
22	22	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2007 PC, PSP, 360	SEGA
23	18	GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES PS2, PSP	ROCKSTAR
24	20	RAINBOW SIX: VEGAS 360	UBISOFT
25	23	TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND PSP, PS2, 360, PC, XBOX, DS, GBA	EIDOS
26	NEW	STAR FOX COMMAND DS	NINTENDO
27	NEW	ROCKY BALBOA PSP	UBISOFT
28	24	ZOO TYCOON DS WII	THQ
29	26	GTA: VICE CITY STORIES PSP	ROCKSTAR
30	28	ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD DS	NINTENDO
31	27	PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3 360	MICROSOFT
32	32	GTA: SAN ANDREAS PS2, PC, XBOX	ROCKSTAR
33	25	GALAXY OF GAMES: RED PC	EGAMES
34	NEW	VANGUARD: SAGA OF HEROES PC	SONY
35	29	BIG BRAIN ACADEMY DS	NINTENDO
36	31	WORLD OF WARCRAFT PC	BLIZZARD
37	40	SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS PS2, XBOX, PC	VIVENDI
38	RE	RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS WII, PS2, GBA, PC	UBISOFT
39	36	NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED PS2, PSP, 360, DS	EA
40	37	SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT 360, PS2, PC	UBISOFT

## PC CD-ROM [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>WOW: THE BURNING CRUSADE</b> DEVELOPER: BLIZZARD PUBLISHER: VIVENDI	
2	NEW	VANGUARD: SAGA OF HEROES	SONY
3	2	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2007	SEGA
4	3	FIFA 07	EA
5	4	THE SIMS 2: PETS	EA
6	5	MEDIEVAL II: TOTAL WAR	SEGA
7	8	THE COMPLETE COLLECTION OF THE SIMS	EA
8	9	THE SIMS 2	EA
9	6	COMPANY OF HEROES	THQ
10	11	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2007	EIDOS

## PC CD-ROM [BUDGET PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>GALAXY OF GAMES: RED</b> DEVELOPER: GREENSTREET PUBLISHER: EGAMES	
2	3	WORLD OF WARCRAFT	BLIZZARD
3	2	THE SIMS	EA
4	4	SEGA RALLY	GRAB IT
5	5	WINTER GAMES	GRAB IT
6	6	50 GAMES BLUE	EGAMES
7	9	GALAXY OF MAHJONGG V3	EGAMES
8	7	SONIC R	EMPIRE
9	11	SONIC AND KNUCKLES	EMPIRE
10	14	JURASSIC PARK: OPERATION GENESIS	GSP

## XBOX 360 [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION</b> DEVELOPER: CAPCOM PUBLISHER: CAPCOM	
2	2	GEARS OF WAR	MICROSOFT
3	3	RAINBOW SIX: VEGAS	UBISOFT
4	4	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6	KONAMI
5	5	CALL OF DUTY 3	ACTIVISION
6	10	DEAD RISING	CAPCOM
7	7	SAINTS ROW	THQ
8	6	WORLD SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2007	SEGA
9	9	GHOST RECON: AW	UBISOFT
10	8	WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2007	THQ

## XBOX [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		<b>SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS</b> DEVELOPER: RADICAL PUBLISHER: VIVENDI	
2	3	NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON	EA
3	2	FIFA 07	EA
4	4	LEGO STAR WARS II	LUCASARTS
5	5	SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT	UBISOFT
6	7	LEGEND OF SPYRO: NEW BEGINNING	VIVENDI
7	6	JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES	EIDOS
8	10	SUPERMAN RETURNS	EA
9	9	ERAGON	VIVENDI
10	8	MADDEN NFL 07	EA

## THAT WAS THEN

[1 YEAR AGO] 2006

- HARRY POTTER: GOBLET OF FIRE  
PS2, XBOX, PSP, DS . . . . . EA
- NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED  
PS2, XBOX, PSP, PC, 360 . . . . . EA
- FIFA 06  
PS2, XBOX, PSP, DS . . . . . EA
- CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE  
PS2, XBOX, GC . . . . . ACTIVISION
- PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG  
PS2, XBOX, 360, PC . . . . . UBISOFT
- PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5  
PS2, XBOX, PC, PSP . . . . . KONAMI
- STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II  
PS2, XBOX, PC, PSP . . . . . LUCASARTS
- TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY  
PS2, XBOX, GC . . . . . ACTIVISION
- NARNIA, LION, WITCH & WARDROBE  
PS2, GBA, DS, PC . . . . . BVG
- THE SIMS 2  
PS2, XBOX, DS, PC . . . . . EA

[5 YEARS AGO] 2002

- GRAND THEFT AUTO 3  
PS2 . . . . . ROCKSTAR
- BURNOUT  
PS2 . . . . . ACCLAIM
- HARRY POTTER  
PSX, PC, GBC, GBA . . . . . EA
- FIFA 2002  
PS2, PSX, PC . . . . . EA
- POKEMON CRYSTAL  
GBC . . . . . NINTENDO
- WWF SMACKDOWN! BRING IT  
PS2 . . . . . THQ
- MARIO KART: SUPER CIRCUIT  
GBA . . . . . NINTENDO
- CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 01/02  
PC . . . . . EIDOS
- GRAN TURISMO 3  
PS2 . . . . . SONY
- CRAZY TAXI  
PS2, DC . . . . . SEGA

[10 YEARS AGO] 1997

- TEKKEN 2  
PSX . . . . . NAMCO
- FORMULA ONE  
PSX . . . . . PSYGNOSIS
- WIPEOUT 2097  
PSX . . . . . PSYGNOSIS
- RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP  
PC . . . . . EUROPESS
- CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2  
PC . . . . . DOMARK
- WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97  
SA . . . . . SEGA
- ENCARTA '97  
PC . . . . . MICROSOFT
- DARK FORCES  
PC, AC . . . . . THE WHITE LABEL
- FLIGHT SIMULATOR 6.0  
PC . . . . . MICROSOFT
- FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2  
PC . . . . . MICROPROSE



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### FRIDAY FEBRUARY 23rd Games Media Focus

After the bi-annual ABCs are released, we speak to the leading lights in the consumer games magazine sector, and provide a full analysis of the latest results. With Future, Imagine, Uncooked and Evolve all jostling for position in such a competitive market, it's sure to be interesting...



### FRIDAY MARCH 2nd MCV Awards Finalists revealed

Every company in our fine industry will be hoping to be included in this special report - it unveils the chosen few that have a chance of claiming a prestigious MCV Excellence Award. With finalists revealed in each category on March 2nd, it's only another few weeks until the winners are crowned and subsequently drowned in celebratory booze on the big day - April 19th.

### FRIDAY MARCH 9th February Charts Analysis

As part of MCV's exclusive partnership with ChartTrack, we reveal the top-selling titles on each format during February, plus a full analysis of what it all means. Was there be an early-year drought of releases? Or did retail enjoy a bumper month of top-selling titles? And which formats fared the best, and which disappointed? All will be revealed in our exclusive report.

### FRIDAY MARCH 16TH Game Developer Conference Review

MCV will provide a full report from the San Francisco event, courtesy of sister publication *Develop*. From the keynote sessions by Shigeru Miyamoto and Phil Harrison, to the mood amongst indie studios facing the realities of spiralling development costs, we'll bring you all the news.

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## MAILBOX

## LETTERS

This week, we've had a huge response to the news that US online retailer DVD Empire has ditched its games offering, taking a swipe at our industry on its way out. While retailers on both sides of the Atlantic respond, OK Media's Doron Garfunkel provides a tribute to SCEE's Kirk O'Connor...

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## RE: 'Angry retailer ditches games, attacks industry'

GameQuest opened its first retail location when Gameboy was the hottest portable toy and 8-bit Nintendo ruled the gaming world in 1989. As the video game industry matured and it began expanding to large box retailers, the small and medium sized companies lost its importance to the manufacturer.

**'Many obstacles to succeed'**  
I agree with many of DVD Empire's reasons for getting out of our gaming industry since there are so many obstacles to succeed. The manufacturers and distributors make it difficult for retailers, be they brick and mortar or online, since they have many policies specified to make profit for the vendor.

But I disagree with them to depart from this gaming industry. GameQuest has expanded from being a retailer with 24 locations in 2001 to become a successful online retailer. Actually, being an

online retailer helped us to streamline our retail locations.

Our management worked very hard to reinvent itself when the large box stores and GameStop captured most of the retail market at brick and mortar.

### US indies must unite

We worked with several publishers to bring back classic and/or hard to find titles which were not available from these retailers. In addition, we carry a selection of games that are limited or non-existent in most retailers.

Also, if we have an association of independent retailers, our cause and our love for the industry will result in the benefit of the consumers and manufacturer publishers.

It allows publishers to have diversified retail clients rather than to have 'all the eggs in few baskets' with few retailers.

**Kevin Baqai,  
Gamequest Direct,  
USA**

## 'DVD Empire is misguided'

Whilst the majority of DVD Empire's criticisms do emphasise certain facts that may be attributed to the games industry, I feel they may be slightly misguided in their assumption that publishers only care about larger retailers. It would not be in any publisher's interest to marginalise a medium of sales purely based on the size of the company.

**'Buying team inadequacies'**  
DVD Empire clearly states in its critique that games in general have a short shelf-life and that the best returns are gained within the first two weeks of launch. They also says that "80 per cent of

games are crap". Perhaps DVD Empire's time would have been better spent looking at the inadequacies of its buying team rather than blaming the games industry.

### 'Commercial awareness'

I am sure the natural conclusion to this problem would have been to order 80 per cent less and only order triple-A titles.

The natural conclusion to this problem would surely have been greater commercial awareness.

I feel it is deeply regretful that Empire felt the need to withdraw from the industry.

**Heath Clegg,  
Via Email**

## 'Boo Hoo'

RE: 'Angry retailer ditches games, attacks industry'  
Boo fuckin hoo.

Welcome to the games industry sunshine, if you can't stand the heat... oh wait...

Oh and shouldn't there be a 'No Shit, Sherlock' MCV Award? I'd like to nominate Nick Parker for his statement that PS3 will bolster sales and PS2 will see a slow down in 2007. Genius, pure genius.

**Steve O'Brien,  
Action Replay,  
Birmingham**

## Kirk O'Connor: A Tribute

I recently heard the sad news of SCEE's Kirk O'Connor passing away.

Sony has lost a wonderful individual and he will be greatly missed by those of us who knew him within the games industry.

I first got to know Kirk when I was at Virgin Interactive during the launch of PlayStation back in '95.

His hard work and infectious enthusiasm, not just for Sony but for the games industry as a whole, was one of the principal reasons that I have always looked back at my dealings with SCEE with fondness and admiration.

He was without doubt one of the cornerstones of Sony's success in supporting third party publishers.

I rarely saw Kirk without a smile on his face and he had that wonderful trait of never seeming to take himself too seriously.

Our industry will be a poorer place without him and my condolences go out to his family, friends and colleagues at Great Marlborough Street.

**Doron Garfunkel,  
OK Media,  
London**

## Can't we all just get along?

I truly enjoyed your article about DVD Empire's scathing comments regarding the gaming industry. So many of DVD Empire's points are right on target; however, it makes Gameco ponder its hopes in the gaming industry.

### 'We need unity'

All of DVD Empire's points have extreme merit but the one point that seems to have escaped all small and medium size retailers is unity.

As an independent retailer, not only does Gameco have to combat conglomerates like Toys R Us, Wal-Mart, Bestbuy, Costco and so on, we also have to face DVD Empire, Gamequest and many others similar businesses. We all sell the same products. We all provide the same service. The only exception is the quality in detail of service. It's the whole package from the smile, to the working knowledge of the game, to the extra thank you email or a return phone call. The whole package is what I and my staff do well. If they had a yearly contest, I would sign up my team in a heartbeat.

### 'The American dream'

Maybe Gameco can say that because we are only a store of one and one is so much easier to manage than many. So our crisis now as a brick and mortar business with some online presence, how do we get leverage to deal? We are now in the middle of our own struggle for survival. How does Gameco reinvent itself?

But reinvention is not enough. It seems that Gameco, like DVD Empire, came from the same direction. Their founders were two guys (Jeff Rix and John-Michael D'Arcangelo) who found a niche and capitalised on that success at the right time. My admiration for their ingenuity is what the 'American Dream' is all about. But if a business that started in 1997 like DVD Empire cannot conquer

the gaming industry, what chance does a retailer like Gameco have?

### 'Survive or get out'

Do we continue to just survive or get out? Gameco faces the same dilemmas as our counterparts. Service, price protection, distribution, profit margins, and even the simplest of aspects of business... availability. These are all questionable matters that impede daily business operations. Sometimes we can't even buy a product, let alone at a decent price to make a profit.

The standard margins for profit should at least be 15 per cent or 20 per cent, right? At least, that is what the rule of economics says. We haven't seen 15 per cent on a new game in years so it means we have lasted almost six years outside the rules of economics.

Since the small and medium sized companies have lost their importance to the manufacturer, it should be about time that we make ourselves heard collectively. We all have a certain business savvy that has kept us in business this long.

### 'Opening hearts and minds'

So my parting comment to my peers is: In Gameco's business world, DVD Empire and Gamequest are the big boys. In DVD Empire and Gamequest's world, Wal-Mart and Toys R Us are the big boys.

So since we all have the same enemies why not make my enemies' enemies my friends. All of us were once small and mid-size.

We really appreciate the opportunity for dialogue with our peers. We hope that our rapport with others like us will open the eyes, hearts, and minds of those who we aspire to emulate.

**Tina Trinh,  
Gameco Inc,  
USA**



## [QUOTE OF THE WEEK]

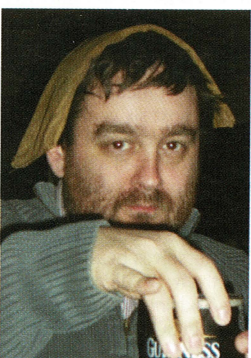
“ We would have much rather retailers had waited until they had the facts of their official launch allocation before taking pre-orders, because it can lead to confusion. ”

Sony spokesperson

## OFF THE RECORD

This week, Team 17 get drunk enough to find craniums fun and Waseem at Indigo Pearl becomes Madonna's new stalker. Meanwhile, Prospero get their guns out for the cameras and one ingenious eBay'er gets hold of a very unique 'PS3'...

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**1 Team 17 in the balance**

What is it with drunk men and the primal need to put things atop their bonce? Here we have studio director at Team 17 Martyn Brown and friends celebrating his 40th birthday in Galway with style. But his 17 cohorts seem intent on balancing objects on their heads in something akin to a pub version of *Wario Ware* on the Wii. If Nintendo is looking for some more new ways to play, maybe a day in the boozier with the *Worms* developer might give them some ideas.

**2 Waseem and the Celebrities**

The recent premiere of *Arthur and the Invisibles* gave Indigo Pearl's Waseem El Tanahi the perfect opportunity to follow

celebrities around and take their picture - but not in a creepy way. Here he is with the movie's director Luc Besson, alongside a paparazzi-style shot of Madonna herself. Fortunately Waseem was able to send them into MCV before the restraining orders came into effect.

**3 Make their day**

If a UK PS3 frenzy throws up the sort of crazed, brawling fanatics we saw in the US, who ya gonna call? Prospero Recruitment. Stop sniggering at the back. The recruitment specialists showed off their hardcore credentials with a spot of 'airsofting' in the company of Razorworks and Empire recently, involving all manner of destructive weaponry. And judging by this

picture, if they tell you that you're hired - you're hired. Don't argue - they'll airsoft you where the sun don't shine.

**4 You do the math**

The phrase 'lack of innovation' might be a well-used phrase for ill-informed online PS3 bashers, but the same criticism could never be levelled at the criminal minority of the company's fans, judging by a recent sale on eBay. Looking to make a quick buck from a resale of his 'PS3', this dastardly entrepreneur merely stuck two PlayStation models together with masking tape to create his very own 'super console'. Call him immoral, call him unscrupulous, but at least his maths ( $PS1 + PS2 = PS3$ ) is spot on.



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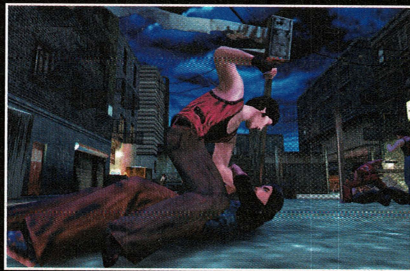
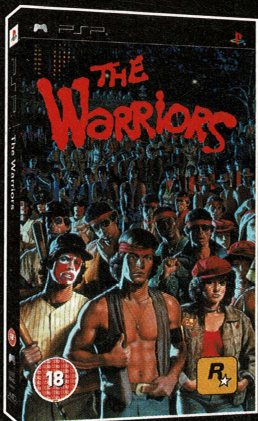




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